

PROLEGOMENA TO A THEOLOGICAL THEORY OF JUSTICE
: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CATHOLIC AND
PROTESTANT ANTHROPOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR
POLITICAL-ECONOMIC JUSTICE WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO KAROL WOJTYLA

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



2003

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT
ANTHROPOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR POLITICAL-ECONOMIC JUSTICE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
KAROL WOJTYLA/POPE JOHN PAUL II AND KARL BARTH

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

BY
STEPHANIE SMITH

ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

AUGUST 2003



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ABSTRACT

This work proposes that the foundation for justice in society begins with an understanding of personhood that begins with Christian theology. While ethical stances such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights are helpful in articulating the bounds of justice in society, such humanistic declarations and programs may reach an impasse if they do not incorporate the depth and complexity of human personhood revealed in Jesus Christ. I will make this argument by comparing the Christian anthropologies of two prominent advocates for social justice in the Catholic and Protestant traditions: Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II and Karl Barth. Parts One and Two of this thesis will examine the strong critique which both of these men offered within their own historical context toward systems which denied the vital connection between Christian theology and persons in society. These parts will outline the distinctly Christian anthropologies that each theologian proposed as a basis for social justice. The final part of this thesis will set these two anthropologies in critical interaction with one another in the key area of divergence: the ontology of human personhood and the methodological issues integral to it. While John Paul has raised critical issues which are central to social ethics and has articulated many of the complexities of human action, Karl Barth's Christological anthropology proposes an ontological construct of being which critically critiques human motivation and behaviour while also providing a social starting point for personal ethics.

DECLARATIONS

I, Stephanie Smith, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 94,000 words in length, has been written by me, that is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date 1 SEPT. 2003 Signature of Candidate _____

I was admitted as a research student in September 2000 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in Theology in May 2001; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 2000 and 2003.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the many mentors and friends who have shared this process with me. I would like to thank my primary supervisor, Alan Torrance, for his keen insight and his careful critique. Likewise, I would like to thank my secondary supervisor, Ray Anderson, who patiently worked with me in my final year to improve this work dramatically. For what is of value in this thesis, I am indebted to Alan and Ray.

I would also like to thank Doug McConnell and Sherwood Lingenfelter at Fuller Theological Seminary, for their willingness to take a chance on me before I completed this Ph.D. I am thankful as well to the faculty and staff with whom I work, for their constant support and encouragement.

My visit with Msgr. Frank Dewane at the Pontifical Institute for Justice and Peace in Rome remains the highlight of my research work. Thank you and the library staff at the Institute for your assistance and for a most memorable lunch. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Hatch and Dan Philpott at the University of Notre Dame for their hospitality and for providing access to library resources (as well as the occasional pool privilege.) I would also like to thank the following people for taking the time to meet with me, answer my questions, and encourage this project: Alistair MacIntyre, Samuel Gregg at the Center for Economic Personalism, Stanley Hauerwas, Mark Husbands, Fulvio DiBlasi, Michael Schuck, and Bill Murphy.

I would have been unable to complete this work without the generous funding of the Diocese of Pennsylvania Church Training and Deaconess House, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, and the St. Andrews Society of Washington, D.C.

Thank you to the many good friends who have been an integral part of this process, including Kristen Deede, Sharon Jebb, Louise Lawrence, Stephanie Chang, the Lukits, the Prokopchuks, Ladies' Tea, the theology discussion group, and the incredible community and conversations at St. Mary's College. Thank you also to my editors, Nick and Sabrina Connell, and to computer tech guy, Carsten Seiler.

A most hearty thank you goes to my family, Joe, Jan and Angelia Smith, who have supported me throughout my life through their encouragement, their generosity, and their unending love and prayers; their gifts have provided the impetus for me to give my own life for others through scholarship and service. Finally, I am thankful to God for his unwarranted love and for giving me the perseverance and creativity to complete this project.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AP</i>	<i>The Acting Person</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Centesimus Annus</i>
<i>Calvin</i>	<i>The Theology of John Calvin</i>
<i>CCCC</i>	"The Christian Community and the Civil Community"
<i>CD</i>	<i>Church Dogmatics</i>
<i>DM</i>	<i>Dives in Misericordia</i>
<i>DV</i>	<i>Dei verbum</i>
<i>EMT</i>	"Ethics and Moral Theology"
<i>FR</i>	<i>Fides et Ratio</i>
<i>God</i>	<i>God, Father and Creator</i>
<i>GS</i>	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
<i>HSCL</i>	<i>Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis for Ethics</i>
<i>Jesus</i>	<i>Jesus, Son and Savior</i>
<i>JP</i>	John Paul II
<i>LE</i>	<i>Laborem Exercens</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
<i>MPB</i>	"On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm"
<i>PSC</i>	"The Person: Subject and Community"
<i>RH</i>	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i>
<i>Romans</i>	<i>The Epistle to the Romans</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sign of Contradiction</i>
<i>Sources</i>	<i>Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council</i>
<i>Spirit</i>	<i>The Spirit, Giver of Life and Love</i>
<i>SRS</i>	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i>
<i>TP</i>	"Thomistic Personalism"
<i>VS</i>	<i>Veritatis Splendor</i>
<i>WC</i>	<i>The Way to Christ</i>
<i>Word</i>	<i>The Word of God and the Word of Man</i>
<i>WMF</i>	<i>The Word Made Flesh</i>

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations provides guidelines for social relations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly in December 1948. The preamble to this declaration declares:

*Recognition of the inherent dignity of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace the world.*¹

More than half a century after the signing of this crucial document, we must ask why this recognition of human rights has not yielded freedom, justice, and peace. Why are the societies that affirm these rights still shaken by a violence from within? Why has a greater understanding of human rights not led to freedom, justice, and peace?

Unfortunately, the effect of the Declaration has not been the emergence of peace and justice in this world. One wonders whether the impact might have been greater had it held a more profound understanding of the depth of human personhood and the meaning of justice in the social sphere. In the present conflict in Israel/Palestine, for instance, the ethics of human rights has reached an impasse because each party has claimed rights, which infringe upon the other. While an ethic of human rights does play a valuable role in establishing the dignity of humans in society, it fails to adequately address the conflict of concrete human encounters, the source of such conflict, and the means to resolution. The attempt to found justice and peace upon the concept of human rights and the deficiency of such an ethical ideal stems from the understanding of what it is to be a person in society.

This work puts forward the thesis that social ethics and social programs require an understanding of personhood that accounts for the complexity of human relations in society. I will propose that Christian theology, particularly theological anthropology, can provide an effective foundation for social ethics because its anthropology addresses

¹ Adopted and proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) on 10 December 1948, <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

complexities such as ethical knowledge, human freedom, and the social relations of actual persons. Social programs that are divorced from Christian theology may benefit society as the declaration for human rights has done. But such programs may continue to miss their mark of generating a just and peaceful society unless they are informed by a Christian anthropology that outlines the true dignity of the human person. The mark will be missed because the concept of intrinsic and inalienable rights incorporates a modernist individualism that is inherently problematic. In the UN Declaration on Rights, there exists no basis in the concept of rights for the giving up of one's rights for the sake of another.² In issues of peace and justice, this shortcoming easily leads to a stalemate in political relations.

As a means of seeking to address these issues, I have selected two contrasting dialogue partners: Pope John Paul II and Karl Barth. Though clearly divergent in their theological presuppositions and their ecclesiastical traditions, John Paul II and Karl Barth share a common concern to understand the nature of the human person and to articulate the foundation for social relations in concrete political and economic contexts. They both argue for the intrinsic connection between Christian theology and ethics because they both locate the true dignity of personhood in the person and work of Jesus Christ.³ At the same time, their Christological anthropology differs both in method and content when it comes to determining the basis for social doctrine.

John Paul II provides a vital voice in this discussion because he has been a leading spokesperson for human rights from a personalistic perspective.⁴ Arising out of a background of oppression in Communist Poland, John Paul has played a vital role in the disbanding of tyrannical regimes that have violated human persons. He has argued for the inherent dignity of all human beings, and he has consistently taken the side of the poor and oppressed. Secondly, in the spirit of Vatican II,⁵ John Paul has turned to

² It only states in Article 30 that one does not have the right to perform any acts that destroy the rights of another.

³ Cf. Esther Reed, *The Genesis of Ethics*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd), 2000.

⁴ See, for example, a compilation of speeches and documents by John Paul and representatives of the Holy See defending the rights and dignity of human persons in *Paths to Peace*, Brookfield, WI: Liturgical Publications, Inc., 1987.

⁵ The Protestant church has historically linked its theology and ethics more closely than the Catholic church. However, surrounding the work of Vatican II, Catholic thought has been finding renewed relation between moral theology and dogmatic or biblical theology in the work of such figures Karl Rahner, Bernard Häring, J.B. Metz, Edward Schillebeeckx, Charles Curran, and Bernard Lonergan. Cf. James Gustafson, *Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 96-98.

theological anthropology to undergird his pursuit of justice and peace.⁶ His argument for the dignity of the human person rests in his Christological anthropology: Christ fully reveals the human to himself.⁷ By assuming humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, God reveals the dignity of human persons. For this reason, John Paul II argues, human dignity and the meaning of human life can only be fully understood in the love and hope revealed in Christ Jesus. A third reason to choose John Paul II as the subject of this investigation relates to the issue of accurately representing Catholic thought. Following statements of agreement with both Gottlieb Söhngen and Hans Küng, Barth questioned whether the larger Roman Catholic Church could concur with the doctrines these theologians had articulated.⁸ By choosing John Paul II as his dialogue partner, this concern has clearly been addressed.

The second theologian, Karl Barth, also became an active proponent of justice in the social sphere, earning the nickname, "The Red Pastor" during the early years of his pastorate in Safenwil, Germany.⁹ In his concern for human persons, he stood as a witness against the economic oppression of his church members and the totalitarian regime of Hitler; later he argued for justice in the capitalist marketplace.¹⁰ Like John Paul, Barth linked his approach to politics and economics to his theology. He argued

⁶ John Paul II, *DM*, 1. "We read in the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*: 'Christ the new Adam... fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his lofty calling,' and does it 'in the very revelation of the mystery of the father and of his love.' The words that I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference—not only on the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way—to God. Man and man's lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love." In recent years, John Paul's social encyclicals have called forth special interest from Protestant readers because they draw on revelation as a primary source for social ethics. [See for example, Theodor Dieter and Reinhard Hüter, ed., *Ecumenical Ventures in Ethics: Protestants Engage Pope John Paul II's Moral Encyclicals*, (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998)]. The turn to revelation has been so profound that Karl Braaten recently raised the question, "What would Karl Barth have to say about the latest social encyclicals?" ["A Response," in *A Preserving Grace*, ed., Michael Cromartie, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 34.]

⁷ Neither John Paul II nor Karl Barth consistently employ gender inclusive language in their primary writings. In this work, the quotations of their writings preserve the original masculine language. However, I have used gender inclusive language to expound the intention of their own works, except in cases where gender adds to the clarity or conciseness to the text. The use of masculine or feminine pronouns includes both genders, unless stated otherwise.

⁸ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Geoffrey Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans., (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957-1969), II.1.82 and Hans Küng, *Justification*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), xxxix-xl.

⁹ Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth*, (London: SCM Press), 83. Stanley Hauerwas told the story of his visit to Safenwil in the Gifford Lectures at the University of St. Andrews, 2001. In Safenwil, Hauerwas inquired of the townspeople, "Do you remember Karl Barth?" "Ah, yes," they replied, "the Red Pastor."

¹⁰ See for instance "Answer to the open letter of Herr W. Hüsey of Aarburg," 9 Feb 1912 and "Jesus Christ and the Social Movement," 17 December 1911 [Cf. Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 70)], *The Barmen Declaration*, CD III.4.542.

that ethics must be founded on theology—the two could not be separated. Barth started with the Doctrine of God as revealed in Christ and he built his understanding of human persons and social ethics upon this foundation.

While both John Paul II and Karl Barth provide a distinctly Christian understanding of human personhood that shapes their social ethics, a fundamental divergence in their anthropology creates different assumptions regarding the formation of just societies. This thesis will examine these assumptions regarding human ontology as they were shaped by the historical and theological context of each man and the manner in which these assumptions form their social doctrine.

I shall argue that the combination of the transcendent acts of human courage that John Paul witnessed in the oppressive political context in which he grew up, together with certain key emphases in modern Catholic thought gave rise to what might be described as “optimistic” anthropology. He believes in an essential continuity between God and humanity, expressed in the doctrine of the *analogia entis*, through which humans are capable of knowing God’s just law and freely making the choice for or against this law of nature. By means of this choice, human beings shape themselves and society in accordance with the common good. His optimism regarding human capacity for articulating and engaging in just action finds its expression in his theme of human dignity, the dignity of persons as rational and free beings, raised to a dignity beyond compare in Jesus Christ.

Karl Barth, on the other hand, became critical of such optimism as he witnessed the deification of humanity in German culture, the destruction wrought, and the impotence of the church to form viable criteria for true justice. He saw that the assumption of unredeemed human goodness could lead humans to claim that they had the capacity to define what is just action and to make Christian revelation irrelevant for issues of social justice. He watched the human glorification of Hitler and the church ascribe such a high degree of dignity to the German race that the Word of God was no longer heeded and the church was used only to facilitate human arrogance and power. In response, Barth appealed to the revelation of God as the sole starting point for human justice. His anthropology, which defined true humanity in relation to Jesus Christ, grounded both human freedom and human goodness in the person of Christ alone. This thesis will draw out the implications of such a starting point for social ethics, in comparison with the positive estimate of John Paul, assessing apparent and substantial differences that arise through such a dialogue.

In order to compare the anthropological bases for social ethics, this work will consist of three parts. The first two parts will interpret the writings of John Paul and Karl Barth, respectively, by examining the development of their respective theological anthropologies as these provide a basis for their social ethics. Chapter One will briefly examine the early political and theological influences that formed the primary theme of human dignity that pervades Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II's mature social doctrine. The second chapter will explore this theme further in Wojtyla's philosophical and theological writings, proposing that his anthropology maintained a deeply theological basis for the dignity of persons. Chapter Three will systematically delineate the significance of John Paul's theology of personhood for his social doctrine.

In Part Two, we will turn to investigate the anthropological foundation for social ethics in the writings of Karl Barth. Chapter Four will examine the historical and theological context in which Barth reacted with his resounding "*Nein*" against any appeal to a starting point for social ethics other than that which is found in the person of Christ. The fifth chapter will examine the critical criterion that emerged from this new starting point in Barth's doctrine of election and creation: the "real humanity" of Jesus Christ. Chapter Six will examine what Barth calls "real humanity" from the perspective of reconciliation and will draw out the implication of Christ's reconciliation for issues of political and economic justice. In closing, Part Three will facilitate the critical comparison that emerges from their divergent assumptions regarding personal ontology.

In summary, this work will examine the theology and social ethics of John Paul and Karl Barth for two reasons. First, it will provide a theory of human personhood, which is based in Christian revelation and which accounts for the complexities of human relations in society and overcomes the sort of impasse reached when individual rights collide. Second, it will contribute to ecumenical dialogue and social action through a comparison of Catholic and Protestant anthropological foundations for social justice. By engaging in critical dialogue with one another, Christian traditions may seek to discern the significance of God's revelation in Jesus Christ for the oppressed, the marginalised, and the violated in human society.

PART ONE

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIAL ETHICS OF JOHN PAUL II

CHAPTER ONE

KAROL WOJTYLA'S AFFIRMATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY IN THE MIDST OF OCCUPIED POLAND

Both Karol Wojtyla¹ and Karl Barth faced the dehumanisation of human persons on an unfathomable scale. Both responded to social injustice by starting from a distinctly Christian understanding of personhood in order to stand and fight against the ideologies that wrought the destruction that these two men witnessed against their neighbours, their fellow church members, and their fellow countrymen. Both came to the conclusion that a distinctly Christian anthropology provides the means for promoting justice in society. In Part One of this work, I will argue that John Paul believed that social ethics must be derived from a Christian understanding of human persons, and I will examine the anthropology that underlies his social ethics.

Early in his life, Wojtyla discovered a dimension of personhood which Nazi armies and Communist officials could not harm, a dimension which led people to heroic acts, a mysterious aspect of humanity for which neither Communism nor Marxism could account: the transcendent human spirit. This discovery drove Wojtyla's passion to study the dignity of persons as created by God and gifted with a moral and spiritual capacity that could transcend injustice, that could find peace and hope in the midst of turmoil through faith in the God who transcends the human situation. Throughout his life as Karol Wojtyla and later as John Paul II, he has sought to affirm this dignity of human persons over against the dehumanising forces of society. He has argued that Christian anthropology affirms the dignity of human persons and that this dignity is the starting point for social ethics. Each chapter of this work will seek to

¹ Pronounced *Voy-tee-wah*.

explore dimensions of this dignity. The first chapter will trace the events and the influences that gave rise to Wojtyla's humanistic impulses. Through these events and Wojtyla's early writings, I will begin to raise some of the main themes of John Paul's mature work, including the dignity of human persons, the transcendence of God as the being who is 'other' yet who graciously gives himself for humanity, and the epistemological basis for knowledge of this God, the human person, and the moral law. The second chapter will look specifically at Wojtyla's affirmation of human persons in his philosophical works and his theological reflections. The third chapter will link the social ethics that arises from John Paul's anthropological concerns to his broader theological framework.

Son of Poland

Karol Wojtyla was born in Wadowice, Poland on May 18, 1920, as his nation experienced the pains of rebirth following World War I. While his fellow Poles worked to build the Second Polish Republic as a free and united nation, Wojtyla grew into a promising student and a talented actor. When Wojtyla was only a young boy of nine, his mother died of prolonged illnesses. Three years later, tragedy struck the Wojtyla family again when Karol's sole sibling, Edward, died of scarlet fever. Though this suffering pressed hard upon Karol and his father, the elder Wojtyla encouraged his son in his studies and taught his son regarding faith in the transcendent God, prayer and Catholic instruction.²

At a very young age, while taking part in a liturgical service, Wojtyla experienced what he calls the transcendence of God.³ As an adult, he gave words to the significance of those unique moments: "It was above all discovery of the dimension of the absolute, of the mystery expressed in the liturgy and which the liturgy conveys as a message that is valid for all time."⁴ This discovery first led Wojtyla to believe in a reality that transcended his daily experiences.

² George Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 27-30.

³ He later recalled the words of the liturgy: the chant, "*Christus factus est pro nobis oboediens usque ad mortem*," (Christ was made obedient unto death for our sakes.) and the reading of Psalm 50, followed by the prayer, "*Respice quaesumus Domine super hanc familiam tuam pro qua Dominus noster Iesus Christus non dubitavit manibus tradi nocentium et crucis subire tormentum*." (Look down, Lord, we beseech you onto this your family for whom Jesus Christ our Lord did not hesitate to be handed over into the hands of the guilty and to suffer and endure the torment of the cross.) Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction*, (London: St. Paul Publications, 1979), 82.

⁴ SC, 82.

Upon graduation from his secondary schooling in 1938, Karol Wojtyla and his father moved to Kraków so that he could attend Jagiellonian University. The young student entered the Faculty of Literature in order to pursue his interest in the human as person, as creator of language, and as the subject of literature.⁵ The following September of 1939, German armies invaded Poland. Still trying to build itself up from the destruction wreaked by World War I, the Polish army was unable to resist Hitler's forces. Poland became divided as the eastern lands were absorbed into the Soviet Union while central and western Poland were divided, some incorporated into the Third Reich and the remainder placed under the control of Hans Frank. Frank ruled with great cruelty, seeking to destroy Poland by depriving the Poles of their rights and by seeking to eliminate Polish culture.⁶

In one of the many efforts to achieve this goal, the Germans sought to destroy Jagiellonian University by arresting over 180 academics, destroying laboratories, and wrecking the libraries. In a defiant act of self-preservation, the University began to hold classes underground. These secret lectures enabled Wojtyla to continue his studies in the evenings after working as a manual labourer during the day.⁷ In addition, Wojtyla continued his involvement in theatre and began writing and directing plays. Most of these plays come to terms with the harsh reality of occupation by seeking hope in Christ, in the midst of conflict and suffering.⁸

⁵ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, Vittorio Messori, ed., (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994), 199. John Paul wrote, "I must say that my concern for 'the acting person' did not arise from the disputes with Marxism or, at least, not as a direct response to those disputes. I had long been interested in *man as person*. Perhaps my interest was due to the fact that I had never had a particular predilection for the natural sciences. I was always more fascinated by man. While studying in the Faculty of Literature, man interested me inasmuch as he was a creator of language and a subject of literature; then, when I discovered my priestly vocation, man became *the central theme of my work*."

⁶ Hans Frank was reported to give the following commands to his subordinates: "The Pole has no rights whatsoever. His only obligation is to obey what we tell him. He must be constantly reminded that his duty is to obey. A major goal of our plan is to finish off as speedily as possible all troublemaking politicians, priests, and leaders who fall into our hands. I openly admit that some thousands of so-called important Poles will have to pay with their lives, but you must not allow sympathy for individual cases to deter you in your duty, which is to ensure that the goals of National Socialism triumph and that the Polish nation is never again able to offer resistance. Every vestige of Polish culture is to be eliminated. Those Poles who seem to have Nordic appearances will be taken to Germany to work in our factories. Children of Nordic appearance will be taken from their parents and raised as German workers. The rest? They will work. They will eat little. And in the end they will die out. There will never again be a Poland." Quoted from James Michener, *Poland*, (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1983), 451. Michener claims that this quotation is factual account but provides no references to his source.

⁷ Weigel, 53-55.

⁸ See for example, *Job and Jeremiah*. Boleslaw Taborski, "Introduction," in Wojtyla, *The Collected Plays*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 4. Unfortunately the play has been lost. For more

Mystical Foundations

In February 1940, Wojtyla met Jan Tyranowski, a mystically-gifted accountant and tailor who was asked to form a group of young men in order to continue the church's youth ministry in the absence of clergy. Tyranowski initiated Wojtyla's philosophical development by introducing him to Carmelite mysticism.⁹ Through this mysticism, embodied in Tyranowski, Wojtyla began to develop a conception of human relation with God as both immanent and transcendent.¹⁰ Wojtyla recalls that Tyranowski taught him to live "a life which through mercy becomes participation in the life of God." According to Wojtyla, his way of life "proved that one could not only inquire about God but that one could live with God."¹¹

During this year, Wojtyla's father became seriously ill. In February 1941, Wojtyla returned from work to find that his father had died in his bed. Even with the presence of friends, the death of his only remaining family member marked this man of twenty with a deep sorrow. He later recalled, "I never felt so alone..."¹² This grief in addition to the humiliation under totalitarian occupation and the heroism he had witnessed in the face of it created a "progressive detachment" from his earlier vocational plans and precipitated his decision to become a priest.¹³

The Angelicum

In 1942, Wojtyla began attending the underground seminary in Kraków where he became intimately acquainted with Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha. After Wojtyla completed his seminary degree in July 1946 and was ordained in November, Sapieha

on transcendence and suffering in Wojtyla during this stage, see John Saward, *Christ is the Answer*, (New York: Alba House, 1995), 83-89.

⁹ M. Malinski, *Pope John Paul II: The Life of my Friend Karol Wojtyla*. (London: Burns & Oates, 1979), 159.

¹⁰ Wojtyla reflected, "Everything he said was directed to a single object, the truth of God dwelling within us. All his efforts, instructions, advice and methods of teaching were designed to show us, and me in particular, how to remain in the presence of God, both in our prayers and in our daily lives." Malinski, 19-20. Malinski also wrote, "We discussed with them the problems of modelling oneself on Jesus Christ in the light of one's own temperament and one's good and bad qualities. We tried to instil in each person a sense of responsibility for his thoughts, words and actions, and encouraged them to review their progress day by day." Malinski, 29.

¹¹ Description translated by Weigel, 60-61 from Karol Wojtyla, "Apostol," *Tygodnik Powszechny* n. 35 (1949).

¹² Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, (New York: Schribner, 1995), 117.

¹³ John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 34. Weigel, 68-69.

decided that the young priest should begin doctoral studies in theology at Rome's Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Thomas Aquinas (or "the Angelicum").¹⁴ Wojtyla soon moved to Rome and lived for two years in the Belgian College of the Angelicum. During his studies, he encountered the two forms of Thomism that predominated contemporary Catholic thought: Traditional and Transcendental Thomism.¹⁵

Traditional Thomism and the Certainty of Moral Knowledge

The papal encyclical of 1879, *Aeterni Patris*, in which Leo XIII called for the establishment of Christian philosophy in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, soon gave rise to the reorientation of the philosophical development of the Catholic church.¹⁶ The metaphysical system of Aquinas clearly influenced Wojtyla's understanding of human persons, with special regard to their means of knowing moral truth. Theologians of the Traditional Thomist strain of thought sought to counter the humanism of modern philosophy by restoring God, not man, to the measure of all things. They argued for a Classical view beginning with the certainty of knowledge about the world over against the Cartesian model of investigation, which began with systemic doubt.¹⁷ The classical framework presupposes that humans possess truth about the world and themselves through natural reason. Though some truths exceed the ability of human reason (such as the truth that God is triune), Aquinas argued that natural reason is able to reach certain truths (such as the existence of God).¹⁸

Wojtyla embraced this Classical epistemology and would later argue in favour of these two kinds of truth, the truths that transcend the human intellect and can be known through revelation by God and the truths that humans attain through natural reason. Truth, with regard to ethical behaviour, falls into this latter category. Ralph McInerny explains, "The moral philosopher can help us get clear about what we already know, but he does not *confer* our primary moral knowledge on us. Again, he presupposes that we have it."¹⁹ Thus, Traditional Thomism formed an epistemological

¹⁴ Weigel, 78-79.

¹⁵ Gregory Beabout, *et al. Beyond Self-Interest*. (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2002), 44-46.

¹⁶ Aidan Nichols, O.P. *The Shape of Catholic Theology*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd, 1991), 331.

¹⁷ Ralph McInerny, *A First Glance at St. Thomas Aquinas*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 33.

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentes*, Book I, 3.2. Trans. Anton C. Pegis, F.R.S.C., (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955), 63.

¹⁹ McInerny, *A First Glance*, 34.

foundation for Wojtyla's social ethics. It affirmed that human dignity does not mean that the human begins with himself to attain knowledge of God, in the tradition of modern philosophy. Rather, the dignity of the human involves the principle of harmony between the truths of reason and those of faith.²⁰

Transcendental Thomism and the Transcendence of Human Persons

The rise of modernism brought new questions for the study of philosophy and theology to the fore in Transcendental Thomism, or *la nouvelle théologie*.²¹ Karl Rahner, Joseph Maréchal, Jean Daniélou, Louis Bouyer, Marie-Dominique Chenu, and Yves Congar all approached these questions, seeking to engage Thomism with modern schools of thought. While the thought of each of these men would have had an influence upon Wojtyla, I will draw special attention to the influence of Henri de Lubac, who was at the centre of the discussion surrounding *la nouvelle théologie* and who became an influential friend to Wojtyla during their work together at Vatican II.

Based upon his work in the patristic and medieval theology, de Lubac sought to argue that there is only one history of grace, which embraces every individual in this world. In opposition to the neo-scholastic divide between nature and grace, de Lubac contended that in both Augustinian and Thomist thought, the supernatural embraces the natural world and all of reality is infused with God's grace.²² With regard to humanity, de Lubac believed that all humans contained an eternal element, a "germ of eternity", which already 'breathes the upper air', which always, *hic et nunc*, evades temporal society. The truth of his being transcends his being itself. For he is made in the image of God, and in the mirror of his being the Trinity is ever reflected."²³ If a man inverts this relationship and declares that God is made in man's image, he becomes estranged

²⁰ McInerny, *A First Glance*, 26.

²¹ This movement was a reaction to the perception that Traditional Thomists were growing increasingly scholastic in their method and focusing more discussion on debates within Thomism rather than dealing with the pressing concerns of the present period.

²² Nichols, 340. Henri De Lubac, *Le Mystère du Surnaturel*, (Paris, 1965). Buttiglione claims that de Lubac and Balthasar appropriated the work of Barth to develop a similar theme of the nature-grace relation and *analogia fidei*. Karol Wojtyla, (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1989), 198.

²³ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard, (London: Burns & Oates, 1950), 202. This concept of 'infused grace,' and the 'germ of eternity' likely helped to form Wojtyla's doctrine of the *analogia entis*, the continuity of man with God. Barth critiqued such terms because they depersonalise God and they call into question the purpose of Christ's incarnation. If such 'infused grace' characterises the human person, then what does the grace of Christ have meaning? Does his incarnation indeed need to recreate humanity if persons are infused with grace? I will address these questions in the thesis and in comparison with Barth in Chapter 7.

from himself and remains incomplete. De Lubac believed the estrangement of this relationship had dangerous consequences for society as well. He critiqued the atheistic humanism prevalent in contemporary social philosophy, arguing that a society which is non-transcendent or which reduces humans to the sum of their material existence or social relationships alone (as Marxism) will beget tyranny.²⁴ In time, Wojtyla began to incorporate this understanding of nature, humanity, and society into his own anthropology, seen in his conceptions of the *imago Dei* and the *analogia entis* as the foundation for human transcendence

Under the supervision of Traditional Thomist, Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange,²⁵ yet surrounded by discussion of *la nouvelle théologie*, Wojtyla became more grounded in the teachings of Aquinas through the eyes of a variety of interpreters. While the traditional approach provided a firm foundation in the teachings of Aquinas regarding epistemology and access to moral truths, the new theology provided Wojtyla with a basis for his future engagement with phenomenology. It reinforced his belief in the transcendence of humanity, and it drew parallels between this anthropology and political concerns.

Faith and Reason in St. John of the Cross

After a year of coursework and a month of travels in Europe, Wojtyla worked to complete his doctoral dissertation under Garrigou-Lagrange. The doctoral thesis examined St. John of the Cross' understanding of faith. Wojtyla argued that St. John's theology affirms an objective revelation of truth as a means to union with God, in continuity with the tradition of Thomas Aquinas.²⁶ It is not necessary, for our purposes, to examine this work thoroughly. I will simply highlight three influences of St. John regarding Wojtyla's anthropological development.²⁷

First, with regard to epistemic foundations for theology, Wojtyla seemed to favour the view of St. John that humans cannot know God as object through natural reason. While humans can attain to natural knowledge, faith alone provides the

²⁴ Lubac, *Catholicism*, 203.

²⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange likely grounded Wojtyla in the basic concepts and origins of Thomist thought, and he taught Wojtyla a methodology to bring other thinkers in dialogue with Aquinas, namely reconciling with Aquinas the mystical writings of St. John of the Cross.

²⁶ Karol Wojtyla, *Faith According to St. John of the Cross*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 68-69.

²⁷ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 51-53. Further references to Buttiglione will be to this book unless indicated otherwise.

“proportionate means” to the substance of revealed truths and to unity with God. St. John argued that the intellect obtains natural knowledge through the senses. However, knowledge of God may not come through the natural senses because of this “infinite distance” between God and the human creature.²⁸ Because no created thing possesses any “essential likeness” to God, faith provides the only means of revealing truth to the soul and uniting the intellect with God.²⁹ Wojtyla wrote, “Natural light of the intellect strives by its own power to arrive at the revealed truths but fails to do so. It can extend no farther than natural knowledge. Then the ‘excessive light’ comes to the aid of the intellect’s insufficiency and overwhelms it by reason of its excess and its supernatural proportion to divinely revealed truths.”³⁰ However, this excessive light, or light of the divine knowledge, is not only objective but also subjective in quality because it transforms the intellect by engendering faith and it unifies the will with God through love.³¹

Wojtyla neglected the vital tension between Aquinas and St. John regarding the possibility of knowledge of the truth apart from faith. His discussion assumed that faith assists humans in attaining the truth. For St. John, the intellect is insufficient in itself to attain divine knowledge; the furthest natural reason can go is to say that God exists.³² However, Aquinas believed that more truths regarding God were known by natural means. He wrote, “The truths about God which St. Paul says we can know by our natural powers of reasoning³³—that God exists, for example—are not numbered among the articles of faith, but are presupposed by them.”³⁴ Wojtyla’s failure to deal with this tension in his discussion of faith and knowledge betrays a failure to recognise this tension in his own work. I will explore this point further in its implications for Wojtyla’s anthropology in the following chapter.

²⁸ Wojtyla, *Faith*, 42.

²⁹ Wojtyla, *Faith*, 43-44. An emerging issue that will be addressed in the discussion of faith and reason in the third chapter relates to this problem of the intellect’s knowledge of truth.

³⁰ Wojtyla, *Faith*, 73. This conception of light relates to de Lubac’s earlier idea of infused grace, and raises many of the same problems concerning the depersonalisation of God.

³¹ Wojtyla, *Faith*, 72-73, 245-250.

³² Buttiglione, 49.

³³ Romans 1:19-20.

³⁴ Also included in this list are God’s goodness, his unity, his creativity, etc. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 2 (1a. 2-11), trans. Timothy McDermott, O.P., (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963), 11.

Second, this investigation of St. John's experience marks the early stages of Wojtyla's phenomenological and personalist interests. According to St. John, faith is not given only in an intellectual grasp of what God is but also in personal encounter. Like St. John, Wojtyla sought to learn about faith by using observation and reason to probe the nature of this mystical experience. The object of this study was to investigate the personal experience of St. John, to discover the reality of faith, its activity in the human intellect, its colloraries, and the effects on the movement of the soul toward union with God.³⁵ Phenomenology would give him the tools to further develop his search to understand the human person to a greater degree.

Finally, the Mystical Doctor provided a theological foundation for anthropology. In his mature works, Pope John Paul II argued for the dignity and value of the human as mystery. He grounded the mysterious nature of humanity in the mystery of God. Because humanity is mysterious, the human is not reducible to human reason and each human holds special freedom and dignity. This theme is central, for Wojtyla developed his economic and political ethics around these affirmations.

The Personalist Movement

A final influence during this phase, which deserves mention, was the personalism of Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain.³⁶ Though Wojtyla may have encountered personalism before his stay in Rome,³⁷ he began to interact with the philosophy more directly through the influence of Garrigou-Lagrange³⁸ and while travelling in France during his years as a student of the Angelicum. Personalism, which grew out of the phenomenology of Husserl and the existentialism of Heidegger, spread through France in the early nineteen-thirties. As a philosophical movement, it sought to offer a new vision of human persons, based upon a belief in the primacy of the person as a spiritual, free, and rational being.³⁹ Because it conceived of human persons as both

³⁵ Wojtyla, *Faith*, 23.

³⁶ John Hellman, "John Paul II and the Personalist Movement," *Cross Currents* (Winter 1980-81):409-419; Francis J. Lescoe, "Pope John Paul II and Existential Personalism," in *Pastor of the Poles*, ed. Stanislaus A. Blejwas and Mieczyslaw B. Biskupski, (New Britain, Conn: Polish Studies Program Monographs, 1982), 80-91.

³⁷ Mounier visited Poland in May 1946 and gave a widely publicised talk at Jagiellonian University in Warsaw. His writings had been circulated illegally under the Nazi government, Hellman, 414.

³⁸ Garrigou-Lagrange's interest in Christian spirituality created ties with the group.

³⁹ Amato summarises Mounier's anthropology, "Committed to the primacy of the person as a free and spiritual being, Personalism denies all attempts to reduce the human person to any immanent order of

spiritual and communal, Mounier described the philosophy both in opposition to individualism and collectivism, as well as idealism and materialism. Wojtyla is credited with adapting this new concern for the person in its significance for politics upon his return to Poland. The influence of personalism upon his anthropology and social ethics can be clearly seen in his philosophical theology and his encyclicals as John Paul II.⁴⁰

Early Priesthood: Promoting Human Dignity in the Midst of Dehumanisation

While Wojtyla was in Rome, his country underwent a tremendous upheaval as the Germans were expelled and replaced by the Stalinist politics of the new Soviet order. In 1948, he returned to become a priest in a country "where the dawn knock on the door was still expected, where prisons were full and beatings many, where the secret policeman was still his brother's keeper, and where the Great Teacher was neither Christ nor Buddha but the megalomaniac son of a Georgian shoemaker through whom millions had died."⁴¹

In this context, Wojtyla found the insights of personalism especially helpful because it enabled him to engage critically with Marxist ideology. While general Catholic opinion held Communism to be utterly false, the personalists sought dialogue with communist ideology and maintained that there were some truths represented by the movement. Hellman explains this new personalist approach:

Instead of embodying evil incarnate, Communism was a partially correct response to the injustices of an old feudal order, and the fragmenting individualism of capitalism. Since the mid-nineteen thirties they had called attention to the humanistic values which ran through the writings of the young Karl Marx, and juxtaposed them to the aberrations of Stalinism. Personalism criticised Communism from the perspective of Marxist humanism. It also maintained that Marxism, whatever its valuable truth, was as incomplete and one-sided in its understanding of

society, politics, and history. Committed to the person as an embodied and communal being, Personalism equally denies all doctrines that deny man's temporal and historicity in the name of a transcendent order. In its metaphysical impulse, Personalism thus aspires to a new realism by recognizing equally man's spiritual and material nature. In its spiritual inspiration, Personalism affirms that man's freedom is fundamental, but that it is realized only amidst other men in their social and historical conditions. In its ethical and political aspirations, Personalism seeks to affirm the existing unities between thought and action, person and community, community and historical situation." Joseph Amato, *Mounier and Maritan*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), 1-3.

⁴⁰ Two books that have outlined the influence of personalism in the thought of John Paul II are *Beyond Self-Interest* by Gregory Beabout, *et al*, and *Human Nature and the Discipline of Economics* by Patricia Donohue-White, *et al*.

⁴¹ Geroge Blazynski, *Pope John Paul II: A Man from Kraków*, (London: Sphere, 1979), 59.

the human person as were the individualistic cultures in which capitalism flourished.⁴²

As a new priest, Wojtyla engaged in this dialogue with Marxism and articulated a third way to address social injustices of a capitalist society: the way of Christ. A play that he began writing during seminary and completed during his early years as a priest, *Our God's Brother*, reveals the impetus behind Wojtyla's work as a priest and his struggle with the question of human persons over against the Marxist view of persons. The play deals with the vocational struggle to make oneself a gift, as illustrated in the life of artist Adam Chmielowski (1845-1916). After becoming dissatisfied with his life as an artist and angered at social injustice towards the poor in Krakow, Adam devotes the remainder of his life to caring for the poor and homeless. The play tells the story of Adam in the setting of the protagonist's conscience, as Adam is in the process of "becoming" Brother Albert through giving of himself and embracing a life of radical poverty and service. By becoming a servant rather than a revolutionary, Adam does not deny the injustice of society or the anger that injustice spawns. Yet he comes to believe that the only social transformation truly worthy of the human person comes through the cross, which "transforms a man's fall into good and his slavery into freedom."⁴³ The resolution of the drama is found in Brother Albert's dying words, spoken as a worker's insurrection has broken out:

Ah well. You know that anger has to erupt, especially if it is great.

[*He stops.*]

And it will last, because it is just.

[*He becomes even more deeply lost in thought. Then he adds one sentence, as if to himself, though everyone listens attentively.*]

I know for certain, though, that I have chosen a greater freedom.⁴⁴

Weigel explains, "This is not religious quietism in the face of injustice and tyranny, nor does the playwright accept that the only alternatives are acquiescence to injustice or priests with rifles. Brother Albert poses a third option: service to the poor in the transformation of culture, which will lead in time to the transformation of politics. It was a point well understood by Poland's communist authorities, who wanted to cut the last line, about the 'greater freedom,' from the script when *Our God's Brother* was

⁴² Hellman, 416.

⁴³ Wojtyla, *Our God's Brother* in *The Collected Plays*, 263.

⁴⁴ Wojtyla, *Collected Plays*, 266.

finally performed in Kraków in 1980.”⁴⁵ Through this play, Wojtyła sought to counter Marxist ideology with his belief in the transcendent dignity of human persons. He argued that the gift of Christ enables humans to transcend the anger and suffering of society by giving of themselves to others, and thus to God. This third way between Marxism and capitalism through the gift of personhood will be a noted theme in the social encyclicals of John Paul II.

A New Method of Investigating Ethical Personhood in the Phenomenology of Max Scheler

Three years into Wojtyła's work as a priest, Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha passed away and Archbishop Baziak presented Wojtyła with a plan, which the Cardinal had agreed upon before his death. Baziak asked Wojtyła to pursue a second doctoral degree by writing a habilitation thesis, which would qualify him to teach at the university level. Wojtyła began his study of ethics in September 1951, while continuing his work as a priest.

Probably due to the influence of Mounier's personalism, Wojtyła chose to study the phenomenological approach to ethics in the works of Max Scheler.⁴⁶ Phenomenology was first developed by Edmund Husserl in reaction to the disintegrating foundations of modern science. As a scientist himself, Husserl argued that scientific empiricism was too narrow and needed a new way of thinking that was capable of attaining universal, or general essences, on the basis of intuitive givenness.⁴⁷ Many Catholic thinkers, including Martin Heidegger,⁴⁸ Edith Stein, Scheler,⁴⁹ and numerous participants in the second Vatican council embraced phenomenology as an approach that moved beyond the Kantian limits imposed upon reason.

⁴⁵ Weigel, 114.

⁴⁶ Mounier considered the philosophy of Max Scheler to be of vital importance for personalist philosophy. Hellman, 413.

⁴⁷ John F. Kobler, *Vatican II and Phenomenology*, (Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), ix.

⁴⁸ I include Heidegger because of his Catholic upbringing, though he formerly broke with Catholicism in 1919. Heidegger defined phenomenon as “that which shows itself in itself, the manifest.” The word is taken from the Greek expression φαινόμενον, which is derived from φαίνεσθαι which signifies ‘to show itself.’ This word comes from the stem φως, or light, “in other words, that wherein something can become manifest, visible in itself.” Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (London: SCM Press, Ltd, 1962), (H. 28), 51.

⁴⁹ Scheler broke with Catholicism sometime after 1924.

In Scheler's primary work on Phenomenology, *Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, he argued that the mind apprehends essence in two stages.⁵⁰ First, phenomenology provides a way of viewing whereby the viewer can enter directly into an immediate, intuitive relationship with the essence of things through experience.⁵¹ In the second stage, the phenomenologist penetrates into what is given as "lived through," discovering the values given through *intentional* feeling.⁵² In other words, knowledge is given through experience, and then by abstraction may one distinguish the affective (in which realm values are discovered) from the cognitive.⁵³ Thus, the phenomenologist seeks to penetrate behind all phenomena to their essential structures (*Wesenheiten*) and to describe these structures in such a way that the modern person is awakened to the poetic dimension of reality which is incomprehensible to modern science.⁵⁴

According to Wojtyla, the study of phenomenology opened up a new approach to reality. He later reflected, "St. Thomas gave me answers to many problems, and Scheler taught me a lot about personality and the methods of investigation."⁵⁵ The significance of Scheler's work for the development of the young priest's anthropology can be seen in the two concluding theses of Wojtyla's dissertation, *On the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethic on the Basis of the System of Max Scheler*.⁵⁶ On the one hand, Wojtyla expressed appreciation for Scheler's phenomenological approach to the study of persons, for his insight into the place of values in ethical decisions, and for the importance of following or of imitation. Scheler believed that human persons could be known and values could be determined through seeing and experience. In other words, he recognised the importance of human action for an ethical system. Wojtyla wrote the following, which is key to his philosophical approach to Christian ethics:

When...with the help of phenomenological experience, we select a value and examine it, we are making an experimental study of moral

⁵⁰ *Formalismus* [*Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*] was first published in German in two parts in 1913 and 1916. For a brief introduction to Phenomenology, see Scheler's "Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973):136-185.

⁵¹ John Staude, *Max Scheler*, (London: Collier-MacMillan, Ltd, 1967), 22.

⁵² George Williams, *The Mind of John Paul*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 126.

⁵³ Buttiglione, 68.

⁵⁴ Staude, 23.

⁵⁵ Malinski, 159.

⁵⁶ Published in Lublin: TNKUL, 1959 and subsequently translated into German and Spanish.

experience. It is possible to apply this method of experimental examination to Christian ethics. Given that our choice of moral experience as an object of examination derives from the belief in the ethical principles supplied by Christian revelation, then the examination allows us to penetrate into Christian ethical values, to uncover the essence of the experience and to verify its uniqueness and specificity in comparison with non-Christian ethical values, and also the borders at which they touch one another.⁵⁷

In pursuit of the ethical in society, Scheler emphasised both this ascertaining of values and the imitation of primary models of the community.⁵⁸ "It is by appropriating another man's ethos that one can identify with the values and qualities to which his life testifies."⁵⁹ Wojtyla agreed with this personalist approach, which recognised the importance of experience, values, and imitation in contrast to a purely objectivist or metaphysical system of ethics because it penetrated into the dynamism of human action in ethical life.

Yet on the other hand, Wojtyla concluded that "the ethical system constructed by Max Scheler is not at all suitable as a means of formulating a scientific Christian ethics."⁶⁰ Due to inadequate use of his own method, Scheler failed to substantiate a normative ethical order. For example, Scheler believed that good and evil are bound to emotion and revealed only in moral experience. Wojtyla argued that this failure to recognise ethical norms results from his inadequate perception of human persons. For Scheler, the human person is the place in which values are made manifest through feeling.⁶¹ Persons are not substance but the unity of lived-through emotional experiences.⁶²

Wojtyla held over against Scheler's anthropology his theological interpretation of persons as influenced by the writings of Thomas Aquinas. According to Wojtyla, Scheler's phenomenology should have led him to recognise the ontology of persons as substance, as both will and emotions, and as forming and formed by ethical behaviour. We will return to these three themes as Wojtyla developed them in *The Acting Person*.

⁵⁷ Wojtyla, *Max Scheler*, Italian translation by Sandro Bucciarelli, (Rome: Logos, 1980), 241. Translated into English in Buttiglione, 62.

⁵⁸ Williams, *The Mind of JP*, 130.

⁵⁹ Buttiglione, 56.

⁶⁰ Wojtyla, *Max Scheler*, 232. Buttiglione, 60.

⁶¹ Buttiglione, 59.

⁶² Wojtyla, "Act and Lived Experience" from Lublin Lectures, p.37-38 quoted by Kenneth Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1994), 44.

At this point, it is sufficient to conclude that although Wojtyla was drawn to the personalist approach of Max Scheler, he critiqued the understanding of personhood at which Scheler arrived because it did not give credence to the metaphysical ontology of persons or the normative character of ethics, which are both affirmed in revelation.⁶³

Promoting Human Dignity as a Moral Theologian

Wojtyla first began lecturing for Jagiellonian University in October 1953 when he led a course in Catholic social ethics. After receiving his doctorate in 1954, he was invited to join the Catholic University of Lublin [KUL] Philosophy Faculty. According to George Weigel, the faculty was established in 1946 in response to the hunger for philosophical discussion that ensued after the Nazi's attempted to decapitate Polish intellectual culture. Following the brutalities of the Occupation and the imposition of communism, the Polish people were confronted with questions about persons and the meaning of humanity in a new way:

Why had some men and women acted like beasts while others had shown remarkable heroism? What accounted for the fact that, while some people were grotesquely self-serving, to the point of betraying their friends, others were nobly self-sacrificing, laying down their lives for others they may have known only slightly?⁶⁴

The KUL philosophers sought to address these questions through philosophical anthropology. They located the crisis of modernity and the inadequacies of communism in a misunderstanding of the human person.

Wojtyla's engagement in this lively community further developed a philosophical foundation for his future work in social ethics. The four theses, which united the KUL philosophy department, continue to resonate in his work:

1. "Human beings can only be free in the truth, and the measure of truth is reality."⁶⁵

They agreed that they must be realistic about the world and about the human capacity to know the world. Truth must be an expression of things-as-they-are rather than a function of power.⁶⁶

⁶³ Williams, 134.

⁶⁴ Weigel, 132.

⁶⁵ Weigel, 133.

⁶⁶ Weigel writes, "A communist-era joke in Poland expressed the realist imperative in a way that everyone could grasp: 'Party boss: "How much is 2+2?" Polish worker: "How much would you like it to be?"' The political meaning of the realist assumption of the KUL philosophers was later expressed in the famous Solidarity election poster that read, 'For Poland to be Poland, 2+2 must always =4.'" (133)

2. The starting point for philosophical inquiry must begin with disciplined reflection on human experience rather than a cosmology. They sought to get at the truth of things-as-they-are through an analysis of human experience, asking questions like, "What is human vocation?" and "Is the redemption of history to be understood in material and political terms, or does history have a transcendent dimension?"⁶⁷
3. They shared a commitment to reason (as opposed to the irrationalism of Nazi propaganda) with the goal to illuminate what good men and women *ought* to do.⁶⁸
4. They finally agreed to mine both the past and the present in pursuit of the truth so that they would not be slaves to contemporaneity.⁶⁹

In 1956, at the beginning of his third year on staff, Wojtyla accepted the Chair of Ethics, a position he would hold for twenty-two years. This lecturing position gave Wojtyla the opportunity to develop his anthropology further by blending the phenomenological method with Thomist metaphysics. Though he lectured in ethics at this early stage, his lectures offer little insight into the shape of John Paul's mature work.⁷⁰ As Wojtyla worked as a philosophical lecturer and a theologian, his anthropology took upon a new significance because his understanding of the human person solidified, as seen in his writings during this period, which will be expounded in the next chapter. He began to relate anthropology with social ethics and moral theology in a manner that continued to serve him in his papacy. In addition to his work as a university professor, Wojtyla's involvement in the Second Vatican Council made a profound impact upon his anthropology.

The Second Vatican Council and the Dignity of the Human Person

In 1958, Wojtyla was named auxiliary bishop of Krakow. He continued teaching in KUL while fulfilling his responsibilities as bishop. The following year,

⁶⁷ Weigel, 134.

⁶⁸ This use of "ought" echoes the Kant's ethical obligation. We will return to this theme of John Paul in the final section of Chapter Seven.

⁶⁹ Four points adapted from Swiezawski, "Introduction," in Wojtyla, *Person and Community*, xii-xiii.

⁷⁰ These ethics are primarily based upon the work of Wojtyla's predecessor, Jan Piwowarczyk (1889-1959) and display little emphasis upon the anthropology that undergirds the later writings of Wojtyla and the encyclicals of John Paul II. Because these lectures offer Wojtyla's social ethics at its earliest stage of development and lack the richness of Wojtyla's later work, they will not be examined in this thesis. For a brief summary of these social ethics lectures, see John M. Grondelski, "Social Ethics in the Young Karol Wojtyla: A Study-in-Progress," *Faith and Reason* 22, No. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 1996):31-43.⁷⁰

Pope John XXIII announced his intention to call an ecumenical council with a pastoral and ecumenical vision. A few months before the council opened on October 11, 1962, Bishop Wojtyla was elected temporary administrator to the Archdiocese of Krakow to replace Archbishop Baziak.

The three sessions of the Second Vatican Council taking place from 1962-1965 sought to address the problems and issues that had been raised in the modern period. As Bishop of Kraków and later as Archbishop, Wojtyla took part in all three sessions of the council. He addressed the council several times, and he worked on a sub-commission re-drafting of *Gaudium et Spes* [*The Church in the Modern World*]. Wojtyla believed that the root of the issue with which the council was grappling was the topic of the human person. He commented to a friend that in his opinion, the dignity of human persons was the theme of the whole council.⁷¹ The work of the Council shaped Wojtyla's understanding of the person both through the formal discussions and through interactions with key theologians like Henri de Lubac. The following chapter will address the philosophical and theological development of Wojtyla during this period.⁷²

Pastoral and Philosophical Work After the Council

Following the council, Wojtyla produced two books that reflected these documents. In 1969, he wrote *The Acting Person*, in which he sought to "give an account at the level of philosophical analysis of the conception of man presupposed in the [Vatican II] documents."⁷³ His second book, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council*, was written to present the content of Vatican II in its theological and pastoral intent.

In 1967, Wojtyla was created Cardinal by Pope Paul VI. He worked to build up the Polish church, and he began to travel more extensively. Many of his sermons from

⁷¹ Wojtyla, "On the Dignity of the Human Person," *Person and Community*, 177-180. This essay contains a talk broadcast in Polish over Vatican Radio, 19 October 1964. He made this comment to Malinski before the radio talk, 173.

⁷² Those of especial importance to him were *Gaudium et Spes*, *Lumen Gentium* [*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*], *Dei Verbum* [*Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation*], *Dignitatis Humanae* [*Declaration on Religious Freedom*], *Nostra Aetate* [*Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*], and *Unitatis Redintegratio* [*Decree on Ecumenism*]. When asked near the end of the council which documents were most important, Wojtyla listed these. Malinski, 188. They are consistently referred to throughout his papal encyclicals.

⁷³ For this reason, in the following chapter, I will place the analysis of Vatican II and Wojtyla's *Sources* before the summary of *The Acting Person*. Rocco Buttiglione, "Wojtyla and the Council: Religious Liberty as the Heart of Vatican II," *Crisis* 11 (February 1993), 21.

this period have been published and include some valuable insights for the purposes of this research. In 1976, Wojtyla was invited to preach the Lenten retreat to Pope Paul VI and the Roman Curia. The retreat developed the theme, which Wojtyla considered the theological centrepiece of Vatican II found in *Gaudium et Spes* 22: "It is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear."⁷⁴ He published these reflections under the title, *Sign of Contradiction*, another important source for this study. After two more years of pastoral work in Poland, Wojtyla was elected Pope on October 16, 1978.

Conclusion

In a political context that sought to suppress and deny the rights of persons, Wojtyla took a great interest in human personhood. He critiqued the ideology that drove these systems by his appeal to God as the basis for human dignity and transcendence. The influence of Tyranowski and St. John of the Cross solidified Wojtyla's belief in the transcendence of God as a being who is "other" yet who graciously gives himself to humanity. Because of this gift, Wojtyla argued, humans can transcend and shape their current political or economic situations through self-giving, as in the example of Wojtyla's character, Brother Albert.

Wojtyla chose to research this experience of faith by examining the writings of St. John of the Cross. During these studies, Wojtyla's encounter with Traditional Thomism led him to an affirmation of the human capacity for reason; his encounter with Henri de Lubac led him further in his critique against atheistic humanism by arguing for the "seed of eternity,"⁷⁵ which creates the human capacity for transcendence. Through these experiences, Wojtyla found his home in the personalist movement, sharing the affirmation that humans are spiritual, free, and rational beings.

The phenomenological method provided further access into his personalist interests by enabling Wojtyla to study moral experience and to articulate the dynamism of human action and transcendence in ethical life. He utilised such research to argue for the dignity of human persons in order to directly oppose the atheistic humanism, which fortified the communist regime. The following two chapters will delineate more intricately the theme of human dignity as it relates to Wojtyla's doctrine of God and his

⁷⁴ Weigel, 224.

⁷⁵ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 202.

philosophical anthropology, the role of reason in attaining truth about God and humanity, and the foundation that these themes lay for the social doctrine of John Paul II.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN PERSONS IN KAROL WOJTYLA'S PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

This work has posed the thesis that social ethics must derive from a theological understanding of personhood. Thus far, we have argued that Wojtyla's Christian faith led him to believe in the God who transcended the political situation and the human suffering that surrounded him. Wojtyla's faith clearly shaped his early emphasis on the transcendence and the dignity of the human person. In the 1950s, Wojtyla's turn to philosophical anthropology continued to reflect his interest in the human person. He used phenomenological tools to explore the human person and to defend the dignity of humanity in a political climate that suppressed and devalued human persons. In his ongoing pastoral work, Wojtyla also advocated the dignity of humanity. From his sermons to his reflections on Vatican II, he sought to put forward a Christian understanding of persons and to explore the political and economic implications of human dignity.

This chapter will explore Wojtyla's philosophical and theological anthropology as he utilised it to discern and to defend the dignity of human persons. Section One will examine the primary anthropological themes of Wojtyla's phenomenological philosophy. Because his anthropology was also influenced by his theology, this section raises the question regarding the relation between his philosophical and theological anthropology. I will argue that in the midst of his phenomenological influences, Wojtyla believed that his anthropology maintained a deeply theological basis for the dignity of human persons, thus maintaining a continuity between his philosophical concerns and his theology. Thus, this first section will explore his philosophical

anthropology and the degree to which he maintained a theological view of personhood in the years preceding his papacy.

The second section of this chapter will examine Wojtyla's theological foundations for the dignity of human persons. From his doctrine of God to his doctrine of Christ to his eschatology, Wojtyla continually sought to explore the significance of theology for issues of human dignity in social ethics. This section will seek to demonstrate that establishing the dignity of human persons on theological grounds was one of Wojtyla's primary concerns. The section will also serve as a preview of Chapter Three, which will explore the theological foundations of John Paul's social ethics. The development of these themes of Wojtyla's in the encyclicals of John Paul supports my assumption regarding the continuity between Wojtyla's philosophical and theological anthropology and John Paul's anthropological starting point for social ethics.

The Dignity of Persons in Wojtyla's Philosophical Anthropology

In numerous essays and books written during his years as a University professor, Wojtyla sought to bring different schools of philosophy into dialogue on the subject of ethics and the human person. Scholars are divided on the exact intent of Wojtyla's work during this period. Was Wojtyla's anthropology fundamentally phenomenological, borrowing elements from Thomism as Anna Tymieniecka and Robert Harvanek propose?¹ Or should his work be interpreted as primarily metaphysical, expanding Thomism with insights from phenomenology as Gerald McCool argues?² Other interpreters such as Gerard Beigel and John Saward claim that the later writings have a Christocentric structure for anthropology.³ Do Wojtyla's theological aims provide structure for his philosophical anthropology or *vice versa*? Or does John Kavanaugh perhaps summarise his work best when he writes:

Wojtyla's life and work, is a "dialectical" totality. Any approach [to his work] which is one-sided, dualistic or reductionistic will lead one astray. Each aspect of his life and thought cuts through and across the other aspects. The meaning of each part rests upon its relation to the other

¹ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, "The Origins of the Philosophy of John Paul the Second," in *The Human Person*, ed. George McLean. (Washington, D.C.: The American Catholic Philosophical Association, 1979):16-27. Robert Harvanek, "The Philosophical Foundations of the Thought of John Paul II," in *The Thought of John Paul II*, ed., John McDermott, (Roma: Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 1993):1-22.

² Gerald McCool, "The Theology of John Paul II," in *The Thought of John Paul II*, 29-54.

³ Beigel, Gerard, *Faith and Social Justice in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II*. New York: Peter Lang, 1997 and John Saward, *Christ is the Answer*, New York: Alba House, 1995.

parts and the living totality itself. His phenomenology is Thomist, socialist, poetic, evangelical, dramatic, political and traditionalist. His Thomism is radical, phenomenological, contemporary, personalistic, and transcendental.⁴

In the following section, I will argue that underlying the dialectical nature of Wojtyla's work can be found the Thomist affirmation of the *analogia entis*. This fundamental assumption holds his philosophical and theological anthropology together. Two essays will illustrate this argument in two parts. First, I will argue that Wojtyla's moral theology and the manner in which he relates his theology and his philosophy begins with the Thomist affirmation of the *analogia entis*. Second, although Wojtyla does claim to move beyond Thomist metaphysics, his continued affirmation of the human capacity for moral norms demonstrates that in moving beyond, he does not leave Thomist metaphysics behind but he seeks to build these phenomenological insights upon this key Thomist assumption. These points are vital to our discussion because the *analogia entis* sheds light on the anthropological foundation for Wojtyla's social ethics and it becomes the bridge between Wojtyla's theological and philosophical understanding of personhood. After examining these two essays, we will turn to explore Wojtyla's philosophical anthropology.

The Foundation of Morality upon the *Analogia Entis*

In 1959, Wojtyla wrote an essay entitled, "On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm," which affirmed his adoption of the Thomist concept of the *analogia entis* as the foundation for his moral theology. In this essay, Wojtyla argued that the metaphysical basis of Aquinas reveals the weaknesses of Scheler's phenomenological approach. According to Wojtyla, Aquinas reconstructed the Aristotelian concept of the good by giving priority to the aspect of existence. Existence is a good and the good is identical with being. Assuming that every being has existence, every being is a good. For what determines good is sheer being. All beings have their own respective fullness of existence and, thus, of good. Because God has an unconditional fullness of existence, God is the highest good.⁵

⁴ John Kavanaugh, "John Paul II and Philosophy," ed., Gregory Beabout, *A Celebration of the Thought of John Paul II*, (St. Louis: St. Louis University Press, 1998), 17.

⁵ Karol Wojtyla, "On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm," *Person and Community*, 74.

Beings have different degrees of perfection and differing types of good. The good that exists in humans is the good of their nature, a good that is not diminished by sin. Another type of good is moral good. Moral good is destroyed by sin. Wojtyla explained, "The good connected with the very substance of our nature is not even diminished by sin, but the good connected with our natural inclination is reduced by sin, although not wholly destroyed, unlike the goods of virtue (moral good) and grace (supernatural good)."⁶

To varying degrees, creatures participate in God's fullness of existence and his unconditional perfection because they owe their existence to God. Participation in existence entails resemblance; so greater participation in God, the fullness of existence, expresses itself in the greater degree of perfection of a given being.⁷ Thus, God is the supreme and transcendent measure of all beings. Wojtyla names this exemplariness, "the heart of the normative order," for the exemplar "is the transcendent measure for what is modelled after it."⁸ The human measure of transcendence "results from the being's exemplification of the supreme perfection of Divine Being."⁹ Thus, when Wojtyla spoke of the normative order, his basis for this order was God, who is the exemplary measure of all things. This normative order is the foundation for Wojtyla's moral theology.

According to Wojtyla, the consequence of this exemplariness is an objective hierarchy of goods. This hierarchy has its origin in God. Humans are able to grasp this hierarchy "sufficiently to be able to assume a proper attitude toward the objective order of goods."¹⁰ Wojtyla explained, "We know that created beings are more or less perfect and that they all stand in certain relation of resemblance and exemplification with respect to Divine Being. Human reason grasps these resemblances and differences in the beings that become ends of human action or means to such ends."¹¹ Because humans have the capability to apprehend by means of reason the very essence of the good in a general way, humans have the ability to posit norms.¹²

⁶ MPB, 76.

⁷ MPB, 77.

⁸ MPB, 78.

⁹ MPB, 78.

¹⁰ MPB, 80.

¹¹ MPB, 80.

¹² MPB, 80.

Wojtyla believed in this capacity of human reason because of his commitment to Thomist metaphysics of the good. In the tradition of the Catholic church, Wojtyla affirmed the *analogia entis*, the analogy of being, which determines the direct relation of God to humanity through the concept of being. This commonality of existence gives humans access, through reason, to the normative order that is based in the exemplariness of God.¹³ Wojtyla explained this process:

The good is the object of the will, whereas the cognitive apprehension of the good—its objectification—is, according to St. Thomas, an object of reason. Both of these faculties work closely together with one another (*utraque ad actum alterius operatur*): the will wills so that reason may know; reason, in turn, knows that the will wills and what the will wills. A result of this co-operation of reason and the will is that the good and the true somehow mutually include one another.¹⁴

Thus, Wojtyla established the close tie between reason and morality. The *analogia entis* makes possible this capacity for human reason to attain knowledge of the normative moral order by working in conjunction with the will. In the following essay, we will explore the metaphysical assumptions that continue to undergird Wojtyla's moral thought, even as he incorporates phenomenological insights.

Reason and Revelation as Significant for Ethics

Wojtyla's essay, "Ethics and Moral Theology" demonstrates his dependence upon Thomist assumptions in establishing his social ethics.¹⁵ Wojtyla defined ethics to mean "a science that deals with morality in its normative, not just descriptive, aspect and that aims at 'objectifying' norms, and thus above all at ultimately justifying them."¹⁶ He divided moral theology into two forms. *Positive theology*, involves the exegesis of the doctrine of Christian morality contained in the revelation of scripture

¹³ In a subsequent essay, Wojtyla wrote, "From this follows the resemblance to God of all creatures in being; this resemblance has its own gradation. Both the resemblance as such and its gradations are gathered together and known in the mind of God as exemplars: the Creator sees in Himself the highest exemplar out of which beings are created and knows them in His image, that is to say, inasmuch as they imitate his essence, which is the first object of his knowledge. It is here that we find the nucleus of the normative order. "*Il fondamento metafisico e fenomenologico della norma morale sulla base delle concezioni di Tommaso d'Aquino e di Max Scheler*," 111-12. Translated by Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla, 76.

¹⁴ Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla, 76.

¹⁵ Wojtyla, "Ethics and Moral Theology," in *Person and Community*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 101-106. Essay published in 1967.

¹⁶ EMT, 101.

and tradition. *Speculative theology* is an interpretation of revelation “by means of a particular philosophical system.”¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas offers an example of this type of theology by his use of ancient philosophy as the tool for interpreting the data of revelation. This “philosophisation” is significant because it is “an intellectual synthesis that goes far beyond the threshold of exegesis (positive theology). Indeed, as an interpretation that throws light on the data of revelation and insightfully arranges them by means of metaphysical categories.”¹⁸ Aquinas’ work, as a fruit of its times, must also be viewed from the perspective of the subsequent development in philosophy.

Wojtyla characterised his own move beyond the philosophy of being toward the philosophy of consciousness, “Together with the emergence of the philosophy of consciousness and the development of the cognitive tools proper to it (e.g., the phenomenological method), new conditions are taking shape for enriching the concept of the human person in terms of the whole subjective, ‘conscious’ aspect, which had in some ways been levelled in metaphysical “naturalism.”¹⁹ This shift towards philosophy of consciousness coincided with a move from explaining morality teleologically to explaining and justifying morality on the basis of values and norms. However, the following quotation demonstrates that the move was not an attempt to rethink or leave behind Thomist assumptions. Rather, operating from them, Wojtyla worked to delve more extensively into his examination of the human person:

What is the relation between norms contained in revelation and the norms of natural law, between “revealed virtues” and “natural virtues”? Are any of these norms exclusively “revealed,” such that they could not be known without revelation? The possibility seems to exist of arriving at a purely philosophical understanding and acceptance of the entire moral content of the evangelical message, especially the precept that persons are to be loved by reason of the dignity vested in them. After all, according to revelation, particularly the teachings of St. Paul, the content of revealed precepts can also be known and is in fact known without revelation, in a natural way. This is also confirmed by general experience, which, in turn, stands at the basis of the current widespread call for dialogue. Obviously, such a purely rational interpretation of revealed norms involves a certain “compression” and “abbreviation” of them. A purely philosophical interpretation is not adequate. In order to

¹⁷ EMT, 101. [Italics mine.]

¹⁸ EMT, 102.

¹⁹ EMT, 104.

arrive at a wholly adequate interpretation, we must turn to theology and draw upon the full content of revelation.²⁰

He followed this passage with an argument that moral theology and dogmatic theology must be intimately connected.

Upon first reading, it appears that Wojtyla was asking the question, "Are there norms which are revealed and norms which are known to the human without revelation, through natural law?" However, the argument that he proceeded to make does not answer this question and appears self-contradictory when his question is interpreted in this manner. Upon closer reading, I interpret Wojtyla's question to be, not one regarding the impact of revealed norms upon natural norms, but the question of the feasibility of justifying revealed norms apart from revelation. He was asking, "*Can revealed norms be justified by natural law?*" Beginning with this question, the passage can be interpreted more coherently. First, he answered that the possibility exists and he cites the teachings of St. Paul and general experience, to show how revealed precepts can be known in a natural way. Then he argued that purely philosophical interpretation of revealed norms is not adequate because without revelation we would know nothing of God's plan for salvation or of the intervention of the Incarnate God in human affairs. Thus, "not knowing this, we would also not be able to interpret adequately the moral contents of revelation (e.g. the precept of love) that are 'in principle' accessible to reason."²¹ Thus, he answered the question, "*Can revealed norms be justified by natural law?*" in the negative. Theology provides the context for interpreting revealed norms.

This essay is of great importance for interpreting Wojtyla's philosophical foundation for social ethics for several reasons. First, Wojtyla was not rethinking the foundation for moral norms. From a protestant perspective, the question of the relation between revealed norms vs. natural norms, should call into question the feasibility of natural law or knowledge about moral norms apart from scripture. However, Wojtyla so readily accepted the Thomist assumption that the *analogia entis* gives the human the capacity to know natural norms that he, seemingly, did not even notice this tension which has been such a source of debate in protestant circles. Rather, he embraced the conception that natural law does have access to truth to a certain degree. This human capacity includes basic moral intuitions but excludes the salvific content of revelation and some of the moral content that can only be interpreted in light of theology.

²⁰ EMT, 105.

²¹ EMT, 105.

Second, this essay demonstrates the Thomist foundation for Wojtyla's understanding of reason. While he sought to probe the human person more deeply through the philosophy of consciousness, he did not lay aside the philosophy of being. He clearly began with the *analogia entis* and he accepted natural reason as a basis for ethics. Wojtyla believed not that the phenomenological method should replace Thomism but that it opens up a new means to probing metaphysical reality. For instance, in a later essay, he argued that the personalist affirmation that humans effect ethical action compels one to recognise the *analogia entis*, the ontological consistency between the Divine and the human person.²² Wojtyla employed this method in *The Acting Person*, the synthesis of much of his philosophical career.²³

Finally, he believed that such speculative theology is limited, indicating a limitation on the *analogia entis*. He said that philosophy and reason may only go so far because they cannot adequately interpret the moral norms revealed by God.²⁴ Though the precept of love can be known through reason, philosophy is a good tool for "getting to the bottom" of this precept. While the moral contents of revelation are "in principle" accessible to reason, the meaning of revealed normative contents can be adequately interpreted only theologically.

Wojtyla's Philosophical Anthropology

Having explored the Thomist assumptions from which Wojtyla was working to develop a moral theology, we now turn to explore more fully the implications of his personalist anthropology for his moral theology. The essay, "Thomistic Personalism," highlights key concerns which paved the way for *The Acting Person*.²⁵ In this essay, Wojtyla contrasts the Cartesian dichotomy of body and soul, which essentially results from identifying personhood with consciousness, with a more integrated Thomist definition of person. This definition forms the basis for Wojtyla's conception of persons and shapes his entire anthropology and ethical programme. In Thomist anthropology, the human person is an individual (*individua substantia*) comprised of

²² Wojtyla, "The Problem of Separation of Experience from Acts in Ethics," *Person and Community*, 33 and "The Person: Subject and Community," *Person and Community*, 236. See also Buttiglione, 79.

²³ *The Acting Person*, xx.

²⁴ This presupposition is illustrated in the architectonic of Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentes*. In Books 1-3, Aquinas "dealt with divine things according as the natural reason can arrive at the knowledge of divine things through creatures." *Summa Contra Gentes*, IV, ch. 1, para.4.

²⁵ Wojtyla, "Thomistic Personalism," *Person and Community*, 165-175.

both body and soul. The soul is a spiritual substance whose natural properties are reason and freedom. The faculties of the soul work to perfect the person. The body contains the cognitive and appetitive faculties that contribute to the shaping of the psychological and moral personality.²⁶

Wojtyla accepts this description as the philosophical basis of his anthropology. Yet he argues that the Cartesian turn to consciousness has provided insight into an aspect of the subjectivity of the human person which Aquinas failed to develop fully.²⁷ Thus, in his desire to speak of the lived experience of the person, Aquinas assumes that the person is an ontological reality whose being finds consistency with God's being.²⁸ Yet Wojtyla wanted to incorporate into his understanding of persons the formative nature of human action. He believed that an examination of the consciousness and values would point toward the eternal or transcendent reality of personhood.²⁹

Consciousness and Efficacy

Because he believed that human experience discloses the person, Wojtyla examined the human's experience of self in action.³⁰ Through phenomenological study, he examined the consciousness of the human.³¹ He argued that man, himself, is the origin of his acting and the experience of efficacy is the awareness of being the agent and creator of the action being performed.³² Yet man is not only the agent of action but also the recipient in the sense that "something-happens-in-man" when he acts. Thus, ethical experiences are not only intentional contents of experience but they actually

²⁶ TP, 167-9.

²⁷ He writes, "[Thomas] shows us the particular faculties, both spiritual and sensory, thanks to which the whole of human consciousness and self-consciousness—the human personality in the psychological and moral sense—takes shape, but that is also where he stops. Thus, St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person, but it would be difficult to speak in his view of the lived experience of the person." TP, 170-171.

²⁸ He does not want to concede to the post-Cartesian mistake of locating what substance there is in personhood as formed in consciousness.

²⁹ TP, 175.

³⁰ AP, xx.

³¹ For more on his examination of human consciousness, see AP, 25-65 or summary by Beigel, 10-12.

³² AP, 68-69.

form persons.³³ For example, beginning with the value of courage and behaving courageously in accordance with that value creates a courageous person.

In phenomenological analysis, this differentiation of human action tends to divide the human. So Wojtyla utilised the metaphysical field of man's ontological structure (as the source of man-person) to synthesise the *efficacy* and the *subjectiveness* of man.³⁴ These two aspects of human action prove to be of pivotal importance for Wojtyla's ethics. First, analysing the experience of *efficacy* provided vital insight into human freedom in action. He identified freedom as the decisive moment of the experience of efficacy. Freedom constitutes the structure of "man-acts."³⁵ Second, human experience of *subjectiveness* served to explain the formative nature of human action. Wojtyla wrote, "It is man's actions, his conscious acting, that make of him *what* and *who* he actually is. This form of human becoming thus presupposes the efficacy or causation proper to man."³⁶ Thus, this phenomenological approach clarifies the structures in which the choice of a good action serves to both create a good and to form the person as good.

*The Transcendence of the Person*³⁷

Wojtyla examined the relation between the will and the person in which "the will manifests itself as a feature of the person and the person manifests himself as a reality with regard to his dynamism that is constituted by the will."³⁸ He calls this relation *self-determination*. Yet only through a structure of self-possession in which the person fully possesses and governs himself is self-determination possible.³⁹

Wojtyla showed the connections between the freedom of the will as self-determining and the transcendence of the person in action. The structure of self-

³³ In *Person and Community*, "Act and Lived Experience," 95-96; "The Problem of the Will in Analysis of Ethical Act," 8-17.

³⁴ *AP*, 74-75.

³⁵ *AP*, 100.

³⁶ *AP*, 98.

³⁷ In *The Acting Person*, Wojtyla's argument for the transcendence of the person focuses on the will. In the essay, "Act and Lived Experience" he argues that both feelings and cognition also indicate the transcendence of the person. See discussion in Schmitz, 49.

³⁸ *AP*, 105.

³⁹ In a side note, Wojtyla explains that the person as creature may also be seen as belonging to God but this relation which medieval philosophers refer to as *persona est sui iuris* does not overshadow self-possession. *AP*, 106.

determination provides greater insight into Wojtyla's concept of freedom for "in every 'I will'—the self is the object, indeed the primary and nearest object."⁴⁰ Thus, the structure of self-determination in each genuine "I will" reveals the person's transcendence in action.⁴¹ Wojtyla explained this assertion by defining *transcendence* as going over and beyond a threshold or boundary. "In every action, the person transcends his structural boundaries, his nature and its drives, by making himself a somebody through the action."⁴² Wojtyla named this indicator of human freedom *vertical transcendence*.⁴³ Because the person is free and determines himself, he ascends over his own dynamism in vertical transcendence.⁴⁴

Freedom indicated a special self-reliance that goes together with self-determination. Wojtyla wrote, "To say that man 'is free' means *that he depends chiefly on himself for the dynamisation of his own subject*."⁴⁵ Free will manifests itself in the ability to choose.⁴⁶ However, Wojtyla differentiated this freedom from Kant's autonomy by describing the intrinsic relation between human freedom and an objective order of the good and the true. Wojtyla's free will has the freedom *for* objects or values but dependent upon truth.⁴⁷ The freedom of the will presupposes a reference to truth for "it is the essential surrender of the will to truth that seems finally to account for the person's transcendence in action, ultimately for his ascendancy to his own dynamism."⁴⁸ A "moment of truth" is contained in every authentic choice of decision making for "if choice and decision were to be without their inherent moment of truth, if they were to be performed apart from that specific reference to truth, moral conduct

⁴⁰ AP, 108-9.

⁴¹ AP, 111.

⁴² Beigel, 16.

⁴³ In contrast to horizontal experience which he explains as "transgressing the subject's limits in the direction of an object—and this is intentionality in the "external" perception or volition of external objects." AP, 119.

⁴⁴ AP, 124.

⁴⁵ AP, 120.

⁴⁶ AP, 132.

⁴⁷ AP, 132 and Beigel, 17-18. Elsewhere, Wojtyla argued that the will is a potentiality for the good because of the capacity for free will and because it is a specifically rational faction on human nature and in the concrete person. Reason plays a norm-setting role by submitting different goods to the will in light of the objective norms rooted in reality. "The Problem of the Will in Analysis of the Ethical Act," *Person and Community*, 8-17 and "Act and Lived Experience," *Person and Community*, 95-96.

⁴⁸ AP, 138.

most characteristic for the man-person would become incomprehensible."⁴⁹ However, despite this moment of truth, humans too often fail to choose the "real good," and this choice of the will leads to the experience of guilt or sin.⁵⁰ Thus, the freedom he describes is a freedom in reference to truth and good because truth is the basis for the person's transcendence in action.⁵¹

The performing of an action not only shapes the human but brings personal fulfilment. The structure of self-possession, of man's willing and acting, serves as the basis for morality. In other words, ethics cannot be bracketed out or treated as an existential moral reality. Morality is founded in anthropology for it conceives of humans as responsible subjects of their actions that are realised through themselves. The roots of morality grow out of the person while also fulfilling the person. Only in such a cycle can morality be concretised. Though Wojtyla rejected an existential moral reality, he did not dismiss the truth of moral norms that determine rightness and wrongness. However, these are expressed in human experience through the creative role of the conscience which "shapes the norms into that unique and unparalleled form they acquire within the experience and fulfilment of the person."⁵² Through responsible and good action informed by truth, the human fulfils himself.

Intersubjectivity by Participation

Having first examined the individual person, Wojtyla then turned to investigate the significance of his findings for persons in community. Man's existence together with others brings an additional aspect of human action that must be considered. Wojtyla aimed to explain the social character of human nature. He introduced the definition of participation, having a share or taking part in something, and seeks to investigate how a person, when he acts together with other people, retains the value of his own action while sharing in the realisation and the results of communal acting. A human's existing and acting together with other persons enables him to achieve his own development through participation. Wojtyla contrasted this idea of participation with *Individualism*, in which the individual is the supreme and fundamental good and others'

⁴⁹ AP, 139.

⁵⁰ AP, 139.

⁵¹ AP, 146.

⁵² AP, 165.

interests are seen as limitations, and *Totalism*, which subordinates the individual to the community in a coercive fashion. He claimed that the intellectual conception of humanity underlying both systems is impersonal:

Every human being must have the right to act, which means "freedom in action," so that the person can fulfil himself in performing the action. The total freedom of action, which results from its personalistic value, conditions the ethical order and simultaneously determines it. On the other hand, the moral order instils into human actions—in particular, those within the orbit of acting "together with others"—those determinants, and thus also limitations, which are the consequence of purely ethical values and norms.⁵³

Wojtyla argued that the common good is the foundation of authentic human communities. Participation emerges as a property of the human person from the reality constituted by common acting and common being.⁵⁴ Because Wojtyla defines human persons in terms of general humanity, he does not make the claim that participation in the Other is grounded in human essence.⁵⁵ This point is of vital importance for the later dialogue with Karl Barth. Rather than grounding participation in the material reality of human persons, the human capacity entails potential for participation in the Other which he may freely choose. In so choosing participation, the human forms himself and contributes to the common good.⁵⁶

Wojtyla named two virtues that promote authentic participation and build up the common good: *solidarity* and *opposition*. *Solidarity* indicates a constant willingness to accept and realise one's share in the community. The attitude of solidarity seeks the benefit of the whole even when the common good requires the sacrifice of one's own share. The attitude of *opposition* means that one will not withdraw his membership in the community but that he will seek the good of the community by contesting that with which he does not agree. These two attitudes provide the basis for dialogue, a theme constant throughout John Paul's social writings. Dialogue seeks to bring out what is right and true and to eliminate partial, preconceived, or subjective views and attitudes.

In the essay, "The Person: Subject and Community," Wojtyla sought to identify the "special value" of community that corresponds to the person's fulfilment through

⁵³ *AP*, 332.

⁵⁴ *AP*, 339-340.

⁵⁵ "Participation or Alienation?" in *Person and Community*, 201.

⁵⁶ *Person and Community*, 203. Cf. Samuel Gregg, *Challenging the Modern World: Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II and the Development of Catholic Social Teaching*, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999), 201-211.

act.⁵⁷ He argued that this special value is the *communio personarum*, or the “communion of persons.” This communion takes place in interpersonal relationships as persons face one another in “I-thou” relationships.⁵⁸ The *I* and *thou* enable one another to develop by discovering the other and oneself in the other. The fullest experience of interpersonal community occurs when the *I* and *thou* reveal themselves and mutually affirm through word and act the dignity and transcendent value of the person.⁵⁹

In the social dimension of the community, persons stand together in the pursuit of the common good, the good of society. The *I* and *thou* relationships of the interpersonal community become the *we* relationships in the social community as the *I* and the *thou* find their mutual relation in the common good, in accordance with the natural law. The core of the social community is this relation of many *I*'s to a common good.⁶⁰

Conclusion to Section One

Section One has traced the shape of Wojtyla's mature philosophical anthropology. First, I argued that the *analogia entis* underlies the anthropology of Wojtyla and creates a bridge for Wojtyla to move easily between his philosophical and theological understanding of personhood. Because the human exists, he shares the being of God and, by implication, he carries the seed of goodness, which gives him epistemological access to the truth and moral law. Philosophy provides a means of ascertaining the same truth that theology reveals. On account of human limitation, this truth may need to be completed by revelation. However, on account of the *analogia entis*, the seed of human goodness provides access to knowledge of the self and the moral law through philosophical, as well as theological inquiry.

Second, we analysed Wojtyla's philosophical move beyond Thomist metaphysics into phenomenology as a basis for exploring the dignity of the human

⁵⁷ Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” in *Person and Community*, 219-263. See also Beigel's summary on 25-28. Wojtyla adopts this language from Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd, 1970.

⁵⁸ *PSC*, 240-244.

⁵⁹ *PSC*, 245-246.

⁶⁰ *PSC*, 247 and Beigel, 27. Because this work is focusing upon the grounding of social ethics in the ontological aspect of personhood as the key point of dialogue, we will not be addressing John Paul's understanding of the common good in fuller detail. David Hollenbach deals with such concerns as the notion of the common good impinges on issues of social justice and human rights in *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.) While exploring this notion in comparison with Barth would prove fruitful, it is not within the scope of this work to do so.

person. While many of the Thomist metaphysical assumptions, such as the *analogia entis*, the good, and natural law, remain integral to Wojtyla's thought, he seeks to incorporate a philosophy of consciousness into the philosophy of being. He explores human consciousness for clues to the dignity of human persons manifest in human act, transcendence and self-formation. The human reveals her dignity by taking a very active role in her own formation through her acts that are humanising because they are in accordance with moral law. In the social sphere, human dignity entails a potential for participation with the other. Active engagement with one's community by acting in solidarity with the neighbour and serving the common good is an intrinsic part of the development of the individual. In this manner, then, Wojtyla's philosophical anthropology seeks to affirm human dignity by working from a Thomist starting point and incorporating phenomenological insights with classical metaphysics and moral theology in a manner that challenged the political structures of communist Poland.⁶¹

Wojtyla's Theological Foundations for the Dignity of Persons

Wojtyla believed that the human intellect could attain a certain level of knowledge about human dignity through reason. However, the truth of human dignity finds its fullness in theological revelation.⁶² While the capacity of humanity to transcend political oppression by acting in accordance with the common good reveals the dignity of human persons in society, Wojtyla believed that the fullness of human dignity is revealed in Christian theology: the transcendence of God the Creator, the self-gift of Christ the Son, and the hope of the human life in God. This section will trace the source of human dignity in Wojtyla's theological anthropology. The final part

⁶¹ This thesis does not incorporate the perspectives on Thomism developed in Catholicism subsequent to Wojtyla's work, traced in Fergus Kerr's *After Aquinas*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.)

⁶² Wojtyla believed that the truth that we were made in the image and likeness of God "alone gives meaning to our existence, and only in this truth do we find the answer to the questions of who we are and why we are alive." [*The Word Made Flesh*, trans. Leslie Wearne, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984.), 57.] In *Sign of Contradiction* he wrote that "man cannot be understood without Christ and that it is impossible to educate him, to develop his human nature and his vocational life without Christ" (137). In addition, he wrote of the limitations of phenomenology in understanding human development: "The person can be described and analysed under many aspects, but in the end any human method is ineffective when dealing with the reality of personhood. . . . We must not limit ourselves to consideration of the phenomena of development, but must try to find their source, their hidden causes. We must investigate the origins of these phenomena and what underlies them, and the basis of ways of thinking, deciding and choosing. . . . The person in development is described definitively in the first chapter of the book of Genesis: 'God created man in his own image and likeness' (1:27)." *The Way to Christ*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 89-90.

of this section will draw out the implications of Wojtyla's understanding of human dignity for his interest in political and economic justice.

Four books are especially helpful for interpreting the theological underpinnings for his anthropology. In 1970, Cardinal Wojtyla published *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* as a working study seeking to present the content of Vatican II in its pastoral intent. This work holds significance for our study because Wojtyla's summary of the Council indicates his own concerns to put forward a Christian understanding of persons and the action that both forms Christian consciousness and results from Christian consciousness. A second work, *The Word Made Flesh*, contains key homilies preached between 1959 and 1978. Wojtyla also led several retreats for University students, two of which are retained in *The Way to Christ*. In 1976, Wojtyla was invited to give a series of lectures to the Pope and Roman curia at the annual Lenten retreat. These lectures are now published in *Sign of Contradiction* and they describe the shape of Wojtyla's Christological anthropology.⁶³ In this section, the theological basis and shape of Wojtyla's anthropology will be examined, as he develops it under four themes: the Transcendence of God the Creator, Christ the Son, Christ Reveals Man, and the Historical and Eschatological Consciousness of the Church.

The Transcendence of God and the Dignity of Humanity

Wojtyla emphasised the transcendence of God in order to contradict the denial of God and the subsequent stripping of human transcendence posed by atheistic humanism.⁶⁴ In a fashion similar to St. John of the Cross, Wojtyla described God's personhood as entirely other, majestic and transcendent above creation, sought by humans in faith and known in silence. This transcendent God is also the God of covenant with his creation. In love, God created the world and the good. This love pervades the earth, reveals the Father, and gives rise to the creation of man in the image of God. Both sharing in creation, the human mind and the world share the same structures so that reflection upon the ontology of the universe moves in step with reflection upon the "axiology of the world, reflection upon the good and its values."⁶⁵

⁶³ Wojtyla, trans. Mary Smith, Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1979.

⁶⁴ SC, 10. Cf. WMF, 5 and 104.

⁶⁵ SC, 20-21.

The transcendence of God and his creation of humanity reveal the depth of human dignity in four ways. First, God's covenant of love, which he established through his creation, reveals the dignity of humanity because the human person has been created in the image of God and because she is beloved. Wojtyla writes, "Each person is unique and draws his whole greatness from being rooted in his relationship with God, because he was created in the image and likeness of God, and also from the fact that God himself has a special relationship with each individual person."⁶⁶ According to Wojtyla, the essential elements of the covenant include human dominion over the earth and the truth in which humanity was established. This truth limits the human creature within the confines of good and evil.

The transcendence of God the Creator and his work in creation also entails self-revelation to his creatures. Because he is Creator, God provides humans with evidence of himself in creation so that "human reason can by its own powers arrive at the knowledge of God."⁶⁷ This evidence indicates the revelation of God in which he calls for humans to respond in faith. Wojtyla wrote, "Human reason is capable of knowing God, the principle of all that exists, by the 'natural light', but it is clear that knowledge of the Creator and the work of creation already involves God's revelation of himself."⁶⁸

Third, the *itinerarium mentis in Deum*⁶⁹ emerges from the depths of created things and through it the human discloses his dignity by transcending or going beyond himself. The world's understanding of the human contradicts this transcendence:

The tragedy of atheistic humanism—so brilliantly analysed by P  re De Lubac—is that it strips man of his transcendental character, destroying his ultimate significance as a person. Man goes beyond himself by reaching out towards God, and thus progresses beyond the limits imposed on him by created things, by space and time, by his own contingency.⁷⁰

Wojtyla posed that the transcendence of the majestic God finds its image in the human spirit as the human longs to seek God and to realise the bond linking God and

⁶⁶ WC, 133.

⁶⁷ SC, 46.

⁶⁸ SC, 46.

⁶⁹ Journey of the mind towards God, (Bonaventure.) Cf. WMF, 9: "following the deepest call of the heart, man feels the need to go beyond himself."

⁷⁰ SC, 16. H. De Lubac, *Atheisme et sens de l'homme*, Paris, 1969. By contrast, Ray Anderson argues in *Historical Transcendence* that God's reaching towards humanity is actually the transcendence of God. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

humanity.⁷¹ While Wojtyla argued for the transcendence of humanity from a philosophical perspective, as discussed in the previous section, this theological basis for transcendence (the fact that humans were created by a transcendent God toward whom they may reach) provides the fuller insight into human dignity.

Finally, God's work as Creator attributes dignity to the human act. Human activity in creation is both dependent and autonomous. The significance of creation for human activity in the world is the prescription to mankind to acknowledge God as maker and to conquer the earth and rule the world with justice and holiness.⁷² Wojtyla defined the rightful autonomy of creation as man's ordering of "all things in truth" in dependence upon God.⁷³ He quoted GS 36: "If by the autonomy of earthly affairs is meant the gradual discovery, exploitation, and ordering of the laws and values of matter and society, then the demand for autonomy is perfectly in order: it is at once the claim of modern man and the desire of the creator."⁷⁴ He contrasts this rightful autonomy with a false autonomy that does not depend on God and forgets his Creator. This negation of God results in the negation of creature and leads to a distortion of the cognitive and active powers of humanity.

In sum, God's creative act and his care for creation attributes dignity to that which he created. Building upon his philosophical affirmations, Wojtyla is able to explore the fullness of human dignity in transcendence, act, and reason based upon the doctrine of God, the transcendent Creator. God affirms human dignity by offering dominion over his creation within the confines of truth and moral law. The capacity of human reason to know moral truth and the transcendental character of the human who seeks God reveals the full dignity of humanity. Finally, dignified human action is that which remembers God the Creator because it forms the human person in the likeness of God.

⁷¹ *SC*, 17; *WMF*, 94; *WC*, 3-12.

⁷² *GS* 34, *SC*, 32-33 and 48.

⁷³ *SC*, 50. He quoted *GS* 36, "By the very nature of creation, material being is endowed with its own stability, truth, and excellence, its own order and laws. These men must respect as he recognises the methods proper to every science and technique."

⁷⁴ *SC*, 49. Cf. *GS* 36.

Christ the Son Restores Human Dignity

As the Son of God, Jesus Christ restores dignity to humans through his incarnation and through his redemption. First, humans find their dignity in the mystery of the incarnation because it expresses the love of the Father.⁷⁵ Wojtyla writes, "Contemporary people in this last quarter of the twentieth century, whose human dignity has been ignored and infringed in so many ways, come to Christ's stable in Bethlehem to ask who they are and why they are in the world, bringing with them their existential anxiety. And when they come to Bethlehem, like each of us they find the reply in the manger on the straw: 'I have given them power to become children of God.'"⁷⁶ Human dignity has been so compromised that people no longer understand that they are made in the image of God.⁷⁷ Through his incarnation, Jesus brought us back to this truth. Thus, Jesus "defined and ordained this dignity when he, the Son of God and coexistent with the Father, became one of us—a man."⁷⁸ By becoming human, he raised humanity to a dignity 'beyond compare.'⁷⁹ He helps us to become fully human by giving us the power to become children of God.⁸⁰ The son becomes part of the human family and enables us all to share in his divine sonship. Through him the new human family comes into being in unity.⁸¹

Second, the covenant, shattered by original sin, is rebuilt by redemption through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.⁸² People are divided in themselves because they often refuse to acknowledge God as the source, upsetting the relationship that links them to their final end and breaking the right order that should reign in their relationship to the self and to others.⁸³ The human is unable to overcome this sin except through the freedom and strength given him in Christ. Wojtyla wrote, "Redemption is from sin

⁷⁵ *SC*, 102.

⁷⁶ *WC*, 57.

⁷⁷ *SC*, 32-33.

⁷⁸ *WC*, 58. Wojtyla also wrote, "The incarnation of the Son of God emphasises the great dignity of human nature; and the mystery of the redemption not only reveals the value of every human being but also indicates the lengths to which the battle to save man's dignity must go." *SC*, 102.

⁷⁹ *GS*, 22.

⁸⁰ *WC*, 57.

⁸¹ *WMF*, 30. Thus, the God of infinite majesty comes near in Christ to those who are part of the covenant community, the Church, which serves as "a kind of sacrament of sign and instrument of intimate unity with God and the unity of mankind." *SC*, 26.

⁸² *SC*, 25-6.

⁸³ *GS*, 13; *SC*, 76-77.

which degrades man, and in this redemption—in its essence and effects—we find the fundamental and inexhaustible means by which man is restored to his proper value.”⁸⁴ Wojtyla called this redemption universal, in the sense that all people are involved in the paschal mystery of Christ.⁸⁵

In *Sign of Contradiction*, Wojtyla described the high price of Christ’s redemption through the eyes of Mary who watched the obedience of Jesus to his heavenly Father. “In all that Jesus did and taught there was new and complete revelation of the great heart—the Father; but the heart thus revealed had all the profoundly human characteristics that he had inherited from his mother.”⁸⁶ *Christus factus est pro nobis oboediens usque ad mortem*, revealing the love of God toward the world.⁸⁷ Wojtyla quotes the words of Paul which indicate the significance of Christ’s obedience, “As one man’s fall led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s work of justice leads to justification and life for all.”⁸⁸ This loving obedience stands in stark contradiction to man’s disobedience. Both obedience and disobedience stem from the will, from freedom: “will and freedom face to face with the divine will.”⁸⁹ Wojtyla addressed the impact of this disobedience upon the world by describing the history of injustice between humans, communities, and nations. Yet through obedience, Christ brought justice. In a strikingly similar manner to Barth, Wojtyla named the only solution to social injustice: obedience to God. Wojtyla wrote,

Jesus Christ took upon himself the burden of this problem and solved it by going to the root of it. Man first became unjust when he became disobedient to the Creator. For that reason, Christ became obedient unto death, thus bequeathing to mankind his own justice to serve as an inexhaustible fount of justification before God. In the past, and even to this day, there have been so many programmes promising ‘healing’ for the world and proclaiming the arrival of ‘true’ justice in men’s dealings with one another. But none of these can be regarded as complete unless it is linked with the justification before God—which is the main

⁸⁴ SC, 77.

⁸⁵ “All this holds true not for Christians only but also for all men of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly. For since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.” GS, 22; SC, 79-80.

⁸⁶ SC, 69. This passage indicates the Christ’s inheritance of humanity ascribes significance to Mary.

⁸⁷ SC, 82. Christ was made obedient for us unto death.

⁸⁸ SC, 83 from Romans 5:18-19.

⁸⁹ SC, 83.

foundation of all justice—that we attain thanks to the obedience of Christ, obedience unto death.⁹⁰

Through his death and resurrection, Christ redeemed humanity from sin, contradicted the problem of injustice, and entered into fullest and deepest solidarity with the entire human family, especially with those who have been victims of violence, injustice, and cruelty.⁹¹ Through the cross, all humans have been redeemed and “conceived afresh” to follow God’s plan.⁹² And finally, in the cross “lies the full truth about man, his wretchedness and his grandeur, his worth and the price paid for him.”⁹³

According to Wojtyla, Christ restored human dignity through his gift of self. The theme of Christ as Gift resonates throughout Wojtyla’s pastoral works because of its profound ethical implications. In love, the Divine One came, revealed God, gave his life for humanity, and returned to the Father. Through his gift of love, the love that is part of the inner mystery of God, Christ built the church, imparted the Holy Spirit, and continues to build the Kingdom of God through his church. The church, in obedience to the model of Christ, also acts as guardian and protector of justice and peace in all human activities including marriage and the family and the cultural, economic and political worlds, along with the international scene. Wojtyla wrote, “In all these fields we must always rediscover the law of gift. With this principle as a basis it will be possible to overcome all that has engendered and still does engender the anti-Love,” the *amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei*.⁹⁴ The vision of Wojtyla can be seen in this prayer: “Lord, may that Love which is a gift embrace us and transform us—and with us, and by means of us, embrace and transform everything there is.”⁹⁵ Thus, the human realises himself and restores dignity to humanity through self-abandonment to God and through the giving of himself to another.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ SC, 84.

⁹¹ SC 86.

⁹² SC, 87.

⁹³ SC, 89.

⁹⁴ The love of self that leads to disregard for God, SC, 56-58.

⁹⁵ SC, 60.

⁹⁶ Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 60-61.

Christ Reveals Human Dignity

According to Wojtyla, Christ as the Redeemer who reveals God's plan of love provides the answer to the question, "What is man?" He quoted *Gaudium et Spes*, "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord. Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling."⁹⁷

Christ reveals the mystery and dignity of humanity through his three-fold mission as prophet, priest, and king. First, Christ as *prophet* proclaims the divine truth and shows the dignity of humanity to be bound up with truth. By nature truth belongs to God himself; yet it also constitutes an essential dimension of human knowledge and existence. Wojtyla notes two reasons why human dignity is bound up with the truth of the gospel message. It shows the human to be "superior to the rest of the universe" because the intellect makes the human person a sharer in the light of God's mind.⁹⁸ In addition, the gospel awakens man to a stronger awareness of his dignity. "Whoever follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man."⁹⁹ Thus truthful thinking and truthful living are the "indispensable and essential components" of human dignity.¹⁰⁰ The church must battle for the dignity of the human, which upholds the truth of faith and moral norms of life.¹⁰¹

The mystery of the human person is also revealed in the *priesthood* of Christ. For humans, whether part of "the common priesthood of all the faithful implanted in the soul of every Christian by baptism" or of the hierarchical priesthood, priesthood is based upon the self-giving of Christ, upon "Christ himself who unceasingly offers himself to his own Father and who is above time; Christ who, in his unceasing self-giving to the Father, binds himself to each of us as an individual and to mankind as a

⁹⁷ SC, 75. GS 22. See also, SC, 117. GS, 22 confirms "It is therefore through Christ, and in Christ, that light is thrown on the riddle of suffering and death which, apart from his Gospel, overwhelms us." SC, 80.

⁹⁸ SC, 118.

⁹⁹ SC, 118. Quotation from GS, n.41.

¹⁰⁰ SC, 119.

¹⁰¹ Especially close to Wojtyla's heart, "the dignity of the human person has to be defended; but that dignity must not be made to consist in unbridled exercise of one's own freedom," as in the case of campaigners in favour of abortion. He argued passionately that the Church must fight on the side of humanity, in support of freedom that is exercised justly and responsibly and preserves the mystery of man found in Christ. SC, 124-5.

whole; Christ who makes us one with himself and offers us to the Father as his mystical body."¹⁰² The priesthood displays human dignity because it involves freedom and it entails an act of the will to be for God and others.¹⁰³ Wojtyla quotes *Gaudium et Spes*, "True freedom . . . is to the highest degree a sign of the divine image in man. God willed to leave man 'in the hands of his own counsel', so that he might spontaneously seek his creator and attain freely, through adherence to him, to full and blessed perfection. Hence man's dignity requires him to act in accordance with conscious and free choices, to be motivated and guided by his personal convictions and not by blind impulse or pressure."¹⁰⁴ Human dignity is displayed in this freedom of the human person to give of himself, to share in the priesthood of Christ, and through this sharing to witness to the profound mystery of humanity.¹⁰⁵

Finally, human participation in Christ's *kingship* reveals the dignity of humanity. "The '*Munus regale*,'" Wojtyla wrote, "is not the right to exercise dominion over others; it is a manifestation of the 'kingly character' of man. This kingly character is embedded in the structure of the human personality."¹⁰⁶ By this, Wojtyla means that the spiritual element of humanity gives persons dominion over the earth, nature, and the world. Thus, this kingliness is closely tied to the 'praxis,' the activity, or the work of the human in the world.

On a deeper level, Wojtyla claims that "all human work, and all that it produces in any field of endeavour, shapes the human personality; but it does so not because of the objective value of what it produces but because of its own moral worth."¹⁰⁷ In other words, every human has a conscience that enables him to distinguish between good and evil. According to Wojtyla, a person's obedience to conscience, to the underlying good in his nature, or to the divine law of love that lies within him is the key to his moral grandeur and the basis of his kingliness or dominion over himself and the world.¹⁰⁸ Linked closely with the dignity manifested in the human conscience is the dignity of

¹⁰² WMF, 84.

¹⁰³ SC, 130, 132.

¹⁰⁴ SC, 131. GS, 17.

¹⁰⁵ SC, 132.

¹⁰⁶ SC, 138. Note the phenomenological echoes.

¹⁰⁷ SC, 139.

¹⁰⁸ SC, 144. Wojtyla also develops this theme in *The Way to Christ*: "The greatness of the person in development is linked on the deepest level to his conscience." WC, 91.

human freedom to choose between good and evil.¹⁰⁹ Wojtyla goes so far as to argue that even sin testifies to the greatness of humans because it displays the human capacity to choose and because God continues to go out toward humans as a Father seeking his prodigal son.¹¹⁰ Thus, even in the case of sin or disobedience, the sacrament of Penance (the turning to God and confession of sin) manifests the kingly aspect of the human. In Christ, men and women are enabled to meet with God through confession and put their trust in God in the certainty of forgiveness.¹¹¹

The church participates in the Kingdom of God by communicating divine life to men and reflecting that light over the earth. Wojtyla repeats that one of the chief tasks of the church in the modern world is the safeguarding of man's personal dignity and freedom.¹¹² Wojtyla emphasised freedom in reaction against "the attack of atheism, which does not bother about human freedom and which creates social oppression."¹¹³ Jesus had complete interior freedom, and he came "to bring freedom to humanity and to each individual who has been deprived of it or is suffering from repression or is being officially urged to reject Christ. He came in order that people might regain freedom and hence human dignity, so that in this dignity they might rediscover that God who has spoken to us through Jesus Christ and who has shown us unlimited love in him."¹¹⁴

The Christian Eschaton and the Fulfilment of Human Dignity

Finally, humans discover their dignity in the hope of the eschaton. Wojtyla quoted from *Lumen Gentium*, "The final phase of time has come upon us, for the making-new of the world has been irrevocably decreed and in a real way is anticipated in this present world."¹¹⁵ He likened the human journey to a pilgrimage towards God in which the "sacrum," the sacral values are the highest and most definitive sphere of human life and self-fulfilment. Through the medium of the sacrum the whole of human life is raised "above."¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ WC, 92.

¹¹⁰ WC, 93.

¹¹¹ SC, 144-45.

¹¹² Sources, 169-170.

¹¹³ Sources, 170.

¹¹⁴ WC, 120.

¹¹⁵ LG, n. 48.

¹¹⁶ SC, 154.

Wojtyla contrasted Christian eschatology with the secular eschatology of temporality and materialism. He questioned positive evaluation of the progress of humanity as growing material gains have coincided with enormous moral shortcomings. *Gaudium et Spes* provides the true criterion for evaluating progress: "A man's worth lies more in what he *is* than in what he *possesses*."¹¹⁷ In contrast, our "century of progress" has become the age of totalitarianism's death camps or liberalism's sickening prosperity, which has given rise to drug addictions, murder, and new social problems.

With regard to the end of life, Wojtyla again emphasised the transcendent nature of the human: "The seed of eternity inherent in man, who cannot be reduced to mere matter, rebels against death."¹¹⁸ Every human person contains this life that Christ brought and grafted on to humanity so that even in death, humans belong to the Lord. Wojtyla takes a personalist view of death in which man's death becomes the ratification of his life and of the choice he has made.¹¹⁹

He links the explication of sin with this mystery of death.¹²⁰ It is necessary to turn to divine revelation in order to understand the reality of sin. Wojtyla defines sin as the denial of God, the evil that is consciously and freely willed, and the evil that springs from the will of a person who is not able or willing to prevent it.¹²¹ Whereas God creates and develops the good, particularly in the moral order, sin destroys the order and the good in the human herself and in creation.¹²² The purification of men and women from sin is effected by temporal punishment such as suffering or humiliation, which ultimately serves to restore justice and good order. This law of purification reveals the temporal and the eternal aspects of humanity. Wojtyla wrote,

The inner structure of the human personality shows how deeply rooted this law is within man. ...Conscience not only decides whether our actions are good or bad but also approves or disapproves of us. When it disapproves it chastises and torments us with pangs of remorse.¹²³

Thus, in the suffering of this life, salvation is born.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ *GS*, n.35.

¹¹⁸ *SC*, 159.

¹¹⁹ *SC*, 160-161.

¹²⁰ "The mystery of death and the mystery of sin are inseparable from one another," *SC*, 163.

¹²¹ *WC*, 41-42.

¹²² Cf. *SC*, 164-5.

¹²³ *SC*, 168-9.

¹²⁴ *SC*, 169. Wojtyla gives the example of Job's suffering through which he found the Lord. In the following section, Wojtyla discusses purgatory.

Purgatory provides for the human's need to be spiritually prepared for union with the living God in grace. It is the darkness in which attachment to the world and attraction to sin give way to conversion to God, purification from attachment and preparation for meeting God, as described by St. John of the Cross in *The Dark Night of the Soul*.

Wojtyla names this final meeting with God the mystery of the final consummation. According to the plan of salvation revealed in scripture, all things are consummated in Christ. The cross marks the beginning of this divine work of salvation, justification, and sanctification, which also provides the outline for the eschaton in which Christ makes all things subject to the Father. While the Trinitarian mystery, the unity of the godhead remains divinely transcendent, the trinity also becomes the ultimate dimension in the affairs of humans and the world when God becomes "all in all."¹²⁵ Included in this consummation is the final judgement that has been entrusted by the Father to the Son. Yet even in this final judgement, the "*amor sui usque contemptum Dei*" will still be present, Wojtyla writes, for "that type of love will reap its own harvest of definitive condemnation."¹²⁶ Thus, the glory of God is humanity alive because of his enduring love.¹²⁷

Human Dignity in the Political and Economic Spheres

Throughout this examination of Wojtyla's argument for the dignity of human persons based upon the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Christ, and the Christian eschaton, we have begun to sketch the lines between his theological anthropology and his social ethics. In this closing section, we will trace the social impact of Wojtyla's concern to maintain the dignity of human persons in the politico-economic spheres of society.

According to Wojtyla, the affirmation of human dignity characterises the Christian mission to the world: "The mission of the Church is oriented to human dignity and greatness, and takes on a special significance in our times, when so many facts (and not just theories) militate against human dignity and greatness; these facts may or may not be close to us, and they may relate directly to our lives or to the life of

¹²⁵ SC, 175-77.

¹²⁶ SC, 181. The love of God towards disdain of self.

¹²⁷ SC, 183.

the world."¹²⁸ We will examine three primary facets of preserving human dignity in the social sphere: practising solidarity, upholding the moral law, and promoting dialogue and fellowship.

Practising Solidarity

In opposition to the Marxist notion that religion alienates the human from himself, Wojtyla argued that the Christian attitude toward human identity is expressed in *solidarity*. As a community united in Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, and pressing towards the Kingdom of the Father, Christians bear the message of the loving salvation of Christ intended for all men and women.¹²⁹ Upon this mission of participation, Christian solidarity with humanity is founded.

The method or attitude of expressing this solidarity that Wojtyla suggested takes place by accepting the conditions of humanity in the modern world and understanding the questions of modern human persons.¹³⁰ The social situation of the modern world is an increasing imbalance between affluent and underdeveloped nations. Wojtyla quoted *Gaudium et Spes* regarding the tensions "between international bodies set up in the interests of peace and the ambitions of ideological indoctrination along with national or bloc expansionism. In the mist of it all stands man, at once the author and the victim of mutual distrust, animosity, conflict, and woe."¹³¹

In contradicting such dehumanisation, "the incarnation emphasises the great dignity of human nature; and the mystery of redemption not only reveals the value of every human being but also indicates the lengths to which the battle to save man's dignity must go."¹³² In consequence for society, Christ stands in contradiction to the unjust economic and social structures and acts as a "sign of liberation for people who are denied freedom of conscience and religious freedom, or who have those freedoms drastically curtailed at crucial points. He is in every way a reproach to affluent, acquisitive consumer societies."¹³³ Preserving human dignity means that economic development must remain at the service of humankind. Humans must seek to eliminate

¹²⁸ *WC*, 133.

¹²⁹ Wojtyla quoted *GS*, I in *Sources*, 274.

¹³⁰ *Sources*, 276, 280.

¹³¹ *Sources*, 277 quoted from *GS*, Preface.

¹³² *SC*, 102. Cf. *WMF*, 57 and 120.

¹³³ *SC*, 108.

huge disparities, provide work that is rewarded equitably and allows for rest, and allow for the ownership of private property.¹³⁴ In the international community, Christians must devote themselves to the cause of peace, to economic co-operation, to the ceasing of the arms race, and to the problems of the developing nations.¹³⁵ Thus, in the same way that Christ identified with humanity, the church is responsible to extend itself into this world of inequality, conflict, and distrust to promote human dignity in politics and economics.

Upholding the Moral Law

Secondly, Christians preserve human dignity by upholding the moral law. The dignity of the human requires that she glorify God rather than serve the evil inclinations of her heart. Wojtyla quoted *Gaudium et Spes*:

Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid what is evil, tells him inwardly at the right moment: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. His dignity lies in observing this law, and by it he will be judged. . . . Through loyalty to conscience Christians are joined to other men in the search for truth and for the right solution to so many moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships. Hence, the more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by the objective standards of moral conduct.¹³⁶

For Wojtyla, the root of this moral conduct and societal order is charity: the moral law is fulfilled in the love of God and one's neighbour.¹³⁷ Charity is closely tied to human freedom. Freedom does not entail exemption from law, but the preservation of humanity through the promotion of human rights, not only by human law but also in obedience to the moral law of Christ.¹³⁸ Wojtyla argued that freedom cannot be safeguarded through human law but through the gospel of Christ. The gospel "announces and proclaims the freedom of the sons of God, it rejects all bondage resulting from sin, it scrupulously respects the dignity of conscience and its freedom of

¹³⁴ *Sources*, 301-303.

¹³⁵ *Sources*, 307.

¹³⁶ *Sources*, 280. Quoted from *GS* 16.

¹³⁷ *Sources*, 282.

¹³⁸ *Sources*, 171. Quoted from *GS*, 41.

choice, it never ceases to encourage the employment of human talents in the service of God and man, and finally, it commends everyone to the charity of all."¹³⁹

Humans have a duty both to their neighbour nearby and to the world. Thus, Wojtyla opposes the crimes against humanity such as subhuman living conditions, degrading working conditions, slavery, and prostitution, in which people are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons. He quotes *GS*, "All these and the like are criminal: they poison civilisation; they debase the perpetrators more than the victims, and militate against the honour of the creator."¹⁴⁰ Therefore, the defence of human dignity and the promotion of a just society entails upholding the moral law. He affirms the council's conclusion: "There is no better way to establish political life on a truly human basis than by encouraging an inward sense of justice, of good will, and of service to the common good, and by consolidating the basic convictions of men as to the true nature of the political community and the aim, proper exercise, and limits of public authority."¹⁴¹

Promoting Dialogue and Fellowship

Wojtyla promoted the call of the second Vatican council for dialogue at the level of personal fellowship through respect for the dignity of men and women as persons. He wrote, "Christian revelation greatly fosters the establishment of such fellowship and at the same time promotes deeper understanding of the laws of social living with which the creator has endowed man's spiritual and moral nature."¹⁴² Wojtyla viewed the Vatican council as an attempt, through dialogue, "to help [persons] to a keener awareness of their destiny, to make the world conform better to the surpassing dignity of man, to strive for a more deeply rooted sense of universal brotherhood, and to meet the pressing appeals of our times with a generous and common effort of love."¹⁴³

¹³⁹ *GS*, 41; *Sources*, 170.

¹⁴⁰ *Sources*, 285. Quoted from *GS*, 27.

¹⁴¹ *Sources*, 305. Quoted from *GS*, 73.

¹⁴² *Sources*, 286. Quoted from *GS*, 23.

¹⁴³ *Sources*, 309. Quoted from *GS*, 91.

Conclusion to Section Two

This section traced the foundation for Wojtyla's concept of human dignity by examining his theological reflections. First, as the Creator of human persons, God instils dignity to persons because they are his special creation, loved and established in covenant with him. In his transcendence, he reveals himself to persons through creation and human reason, and he draws humans toward himself through their own transcendence. And further, God's creation reveals the dignity of humanity through action and self-formation. Secondly, Christ the Son reveals human dignity because he restores that which was lost through the fall of man, because his incarnation is the highest affirmation of humanity, and because humans participate in his vocation as prophet, priest, and king. The Christian hope in eschaton also reveals the "seed of eternity inherent in man,"¹⁴⁴ which gives dignity to the life and death of the human person. This theme of dignity is a key to Wojtyla's political and economic ethics. The human person must be valued above political and economic demands by the practice of solidarity, the upholding of human rights by the moral law, and the promotion of dialogue and fellowship.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Wojtyla's distinctly theological affirmations of human dignity correspond with his philosophical discoveries in the realm of human act and consciousness. From the theological side, Wojtyla affirmed the dignity of human persons as it is revealed by the transcendence of God the Creator, the restoring work of Christ the Son, and the eternal nature of humanity. He employed philosophical tools in order to move toward this final theological affirmation of dignity, by pointing toward transcendence and by locating human dignity in self-determination and in human action, in participation with the common good. From both the philosophical and theological sides, Wojtyla argued that the seed of dignity, goodness, and life, in humanity which finds its base in the *analogia entis* enables humans to work toward a just society by living in accordance with the moral law or the common good. Good human action forms not only the individual but also society in accordance with the moral law, creating a just society, promoting charity toward the neighbour, and thereby upholding the dignity of human persons.

¹⁴⁴ SC, 159.

At this early stage, Wojtyla infused his Thomist metaphysical and theological presuppositions with phenomenological discoveries in order to argue for the just treatment of humans in society. This influence can also be seen in his subsequent moral theology. The following chapter will examine the implications of anthropology for political and economic justice in the mature work of John Paul II.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

Wojtyla's election to the papacy in October 1978 brought great hope to the people of his oppressed homeland. As John Paul II, he played a pivotal role in felling communism in Poland and Eastern Europe, and he has enhanced the ongoing work of the Catholic church for justice and peace through his consistent defence of the human person in his speeches and encyclicals.¹ His work as John Paul² demonstrates his ongoing conviction that political and economic ethics must derive from a Christian understanding of personhood.

As a young man, Wojtyla witnessed the destruction of human life by oppressive political ideologies and regimes. He argued for the dignity of human persons over against such regimes through his plays, his pastoral work, and later through his philosophical and theological anthropology. The previous chapter sought to demonstrate that a Christian understanding of personhood formed the starting point for his social ethics, and it began to explore the major themes that supported his social doctrine. This chapter will examine in greater detail the theological anthropology of John Paul that undergirds his approach to social ethics. By doing so, we hope to outline

¹ Although Pope John Paul II may not be the primary author of his encyclicals, his speeches, and his sermons, let it be assumed that the work that is signed in his name or the words spoken by him are composed of his primary theological assumptions, personalist concerns, and social emphases. One reason for introducing the thought of Wojtyla in Chapters One and Two was to address this concern regarding the authenticity of John Paul's works. The sceptical reader will find a surprising continuity between Wojtyla and John Paul. The primary assumptions, concerns, and emphases of Wojtyla are further developed in the writings attributed to John Paul II.

² Reference to Pope John Paul II as John Paul will be made for the remainder of this work. A new book on this topic of John Paul's philosophical anthropology will be available following the completion of this thesis: John McNerney, *Footbridge Toward the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophical Thought of John Paul II*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003).

the distinctive shape that Catholic anthropology provides for social ethics and to delineate the primary reasons that a just social ethic needs to appeal to theological anthropology. A Christian doctrine of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, John Paul would argue, provides unique insight into the depth of human dignity. This dignity holds profound implications for the political and economic spheres of human life. Brief examination will be given to the significance for political and economic systems, law, work, and impoverished persons in societies.

This chapter will systematically examine the significance of John Paul's theology of personhood for his social doctrine. Section One will examine John Paul's doctrine of God, his doctrine of Christ, and his doctrine of the Holy Spirit as they provide the theological basis for his anthropology, especially his concern to explore the dignity of human persons. Section Two will analyse the social doctrine of John Paul as it is expounded in his moral theology and in his writings on political and economic justice. The final conclusion will draw together the findings of these three chapters on Wojtyla/John Paul II.

Theological Basis:

The Doctrine of God and the Dignity of Persons

John Paul finds basis for the dignity of humans in his doctrine of God in four distinct areas: the dignity of reason, the Trinity and moral law, God's work as Creator, and God's Kingdom. We will examine these four areas as they reveal the full dignity of human persons. In addition, we will begin to explore the moral and social implications of this dignity.

The Dignity of Reason

An investigation of the human capacity for faith and reason forms a prolegomena of sorts to John Paul's doctrine of God. According to his catechesis, the dignity of humans is deeply connected to their capacity to reason and to ascertain truth.³ As we examined in the previous chapter, the doctrine of the *analogia entis* affirms the human person as free and intelligent, with the capacity to know God, truth, and goodness. This doctrine finds its expression in John Paul's affirmation of the

³ John Paul, *God, Father and Creator: A Catechesis on the Creed*. Vol. 1. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1996), 54.

capacity for humanity to know God through reason. Although human sin has "impaired" the human capacity "by an aversion to the One who is the source and origin of truth,"⁴ the power of human reason can ultimately be trusted to lead humans toward God.⁵ He opposes the contemporary abandoning of the search for truth because it obscures this "true dignity of reason."⁶

John Paul explores the relation between faith and reason further by examining the relation between theology and philosophy. He argued that the truth attained through natural reason by philosophy and the truth based upon faith in revelation are neither *identical* nor *mutually exclusive*. On the one hand, they are not *identical*: Philosophical knowledge depends upon sense perception and experience and it advances by the light of the intellect alone. According to John Paul, the human is capable of knowing God by reason alone. He said, "Alongside the 'I believe' [of faith] we find a certain 'I know.' This 'I know' concerns the existence of God and even, to a certain extent, his essence. This intellectual knowledge of God is systematically treated by a science called 'natural theology,' which is a philosophy of nature and springs from metaphysics, that is, the philosophy of being."⁷ The quest for this order of knowledge arises from the desire within every human to know the truth and to understand the meaning of life.

Unlike philosophy, faith is based upon God's testimony in his self-revelation of salvation for the world. The Second Vatican Council defined faith as a "particular response on the part of mankind to God's revelation of himself."⁸ The Constitution on Divine Revelation states, "Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God. . . . The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and profoundly understood."⁹

On the other hand, theology and philosophy are not *mutually exclusive*. John Paul wrote:

The relationship between theology and philosophy is best construed as a circle. Theology's source and starting-point must always be the word of

⁴ *FR*, 22.

⁵ *FR*, 56.

⁶ *FR*, 47.

⁷ *God*, 40.

⁸ *Sources*, 19.

⁹ *DV*, 5.

God revealed in history, while its final goal will be an understanding of that word which increases with each passing generation. Yet since God's word is Truth, the human search for truth—philosophy, pursued in keeping with its own rules¹⁰—can only help to understand God's word better. It is not just a question of theological discourse using this or that concept or element of a philosophical construct; what matters most is that the believer's reason use its powers of reflection in the search for truth which moves from the word of God towards a better understanding of it.¹¹

The truth of revelation completes and perfects the truth attained through reason. And philosophy provides the thought-structures for the understanding of faith.¹² For example, moral theology requires a sound philosophical vision of human nature and society.¹³

Ralph McInerny points out one problem with John Paul's approach to faith and reason, especially in his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, is that, prior to any formal philosophising, John Paul assumed certain norms which provide a reference point for measuring particular philosophical systems.¹⁴ For example, he condemns fideism and radical traditionalism because they distrust reason's natural capacities. In addition, he condemns rationalism and ontologism for attributing to natural reason a knowledge, which only the light of faith could confer.¹⁵ He condemns these systems based upon his philosophical commitment to the *analogia entis* and the Thomist philosophy of being. Within this system, the human person is affirmed as free and intelligent, with the capacity to know God, truth, and goodness. In addition, fundamental moral norms provide a basis for social doctrine. In this encyclical, these 'rules' or norms provide that basis by which to assess other systems. Upon what basis may Thomistic metaphysics claim superiority over other philosophies? How does one know that the human reason

¹⁰ Aquinas would characterise these elements: (1) the principle of contradiction, (2) the principle of finality, (3) the principle of causality, (4) Human person as free and intelligent, (5) with the capacity to know God, truth, and goodness, (6) fundamental moral norms. Ralph McInerny, "*Fides et Ratio*" a paper presented at The Thomistic Seminar for the Jacques Maritain Centre, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1999), section 2, page 3.

¹¹ *FR*, 73. Cf. *God* 217: "Therefore, if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith. For earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God."

¹² *FR*, 77.

¹³ *FR*, 68.

¹⁴ *FR*, 4. In "*Fides et Ratio*," part 2 page 4. See also Cyril O'Regan, "Christian Scholarship . . . For What?" a paper presented at an International, Interdisciplinary Conference, session: the Problem of Catholic Scholarship, University of Notre Dame, September 27-29, 2001.

¹⁵ *FR*, 52.

of Aquinas may provide a foundation for judging other philosophical assumptions? In the areas where metaphysics and rationalism critique one another, upon what basis can John Paul claim that one is right and one is wrong? Does he make this claim upon the basis of previously assumed norms such as the principle of contradiction? Does this not lead to a circular argument that one may only find her way out of through the light of revelation?

A second critique from the Protestant perspective of Alvin Plantinga addresses the problem of sin. Plantinga wrote, "What the Catholic view neglects here, according to this Reformed rejoinder, is the fact that non-Christian philosophy is not merely handicapped by the 'inherent weakness of human reason'; it is rather that philosophers, like humanity in general, are *fallen*, and in need of *conversion*."¹⁶ According to reformed doctrine, the fall both separated humans from God and destroyed their capacity to gain knowledge about God apart from God's generous revelation. John Paul referred to the effect of sin upon reason as an impairment caused by the human's aversion to God. "All men and women were caught up in this primal disobedience, which so wounded reason that from then on its path to full truth would be strewn with obstacles."¹⁷ The ascent of the creature to God made possible through "the careful and persevering reading of the witness of created things" by human reason has become more difficult.¹⁸ Plantinga critiques *Faith and Reason* for underestimating the place of sin, apostasy, and the rejection of Christian truth by non-Christian philosophers. He writes,

It isn't that the result of sin, with respect to our intellectual capacities, is just that we lost a supernatural addition to our natural faculties, those natural faculties themselves functioning more or less as before. It is rather that (a) our natural faculties themselves suffered substantially from the results of sin, so that our ability to know ourselves, others, and God has been damaged, and (b) by virtue of our corruption, we are inclined to set ourselves against God.¹⁹

Plantinga also critiques John Paul's optimism regarding the possibilities for philosophical inquiry. Plantinga offers for evidence the incompatibility of most of

¹⁶ Alvin Plantinga, "Philosophers respond to Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*," *Christianity Today International/Books and Culture Magazine* 5, no. 4 (July/August 1999):32.

¹⁷ *FR*, 22.

¹⁸ *God*, 43.

¹⁹ Plantinga, "*Fides*," 36.

modern philosophy with Christian theism. According to Plantinga, these philosophies are not incomplete approximations to Christian truth; they are antithetical to it.²⁰

In his critique Plantinga did not acknowledge that John Paul addressed this incompatibility in his discussion of the warning of Paul to the Colossians: "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe and not according to Christ."²¹ John Paul argued that these words are appropriate when applied to esoteric superstition that is widespread today. He agreed that one must "sound the alarm when confronted with a cultural perspective that sought to subordinate the truth of Revelation to the interpretation of the philosophers"²² and he did critique systems of thought which are opposed to God, such as Nihilism. Where John Paul would differ from Plantinga is in his assumption that humans have the capacity to know God and truth and the effect that this assumption has on his approach to anti-Christian philosophies such as Marxism. As seen in the previous chapters, Wojtyla sought to draw the truths from these philosophical systems, sought to listen to the questions being asked in these systems, and he sought to influence these systems, such as phenomenology, with the truths of revelation.

These critiques provide insight in two areas. First, a fundamental difference between Protestant and Catholic epistemology is based upon two different interpretations of the fall and the capacity or incapacity of humanity which resulted. Second, while Plantinga does neglect certain nuances of John Paul's interaction with anti-Christian philosophies, his critique brings a needed realism to the optimism which dominates *Fides et Ratio*, with regard to the compatibility of Christian and non-Christian philosophies. McInerny's criticism questions John Paul's basis for evaluating these systems. In conclusion, the relation between faith and reason is grounded in the notion of the *analogia entis*, in which humans can know truth about God without his self-revelation. This relationship with truth demonstrates the true dignity of humans and forms the basis for John Paul's utilisation of natural law.

²⁰ Plantinga, "Fides," 35.

²¹ FR, 37.

²² FR, 37.

The Trinity and Moral Law Reveal Dignity

In the previous section, we explored John Paul's foundation for human dignity in the capacity for human reason to ascertain truth by philosophical inquiry and theological revelation. The remainder of this work will focus upon the implications of divine revelation for human personhood and social doctrine because revelation "completes and perfects" the truth known through reason.²³ John Paul believed that "man cannot be manifest in the full dignity of his nature without reference . . . to God."²⁴ God's self-revelation also reveals the mystery of humanity.

What does God reveal about himself? He reveals that he is Triune and that he is holy. According to John Paul, God reveals himself in scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God's fatherhood is manifested in merciful love and expressed in divine providence.²⁵ Christ is the Son of the living God, who is one with the Father and reveals the Father to humankind. John Paul affirmed the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by saying that the son is "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father..."²⁶ The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The triune God exists in the unity of oneness while three distinct persons.

Second, God revealed himself to be holy. John Paul identified the moral law with the will of the triune God. He defined God's holiness as "absolute 'separation' from all moral evil, and the exclusion and radical rejection of sin and, at the same time, it is absolute goodness." God himself is holiness because his will is identified with the moral law. "This law exists in God himself as in its eternal source, and therefore it is called Eternal Law."²⁷ God made himself known as the source of this moral law through the old covenant and the teaching of Christ. The human achieves dignity by living in accordance with this law, law which is known to all through reason.²⁸

²³ With the exception of Avery Dulles' *Splendor of Faith: The Theological Vision of Pope John Paul II*, (New York: Crossroad, 1999), very little work has been done on John Paul II's theology. While *Fides et Ratio* and his moral encyclicals attracted more scholarly interaction, the level of engagement with the shape of his theology (except for Mariology) remains relatively low.

²⁴ *DM*, 1.

²⁵ *God*, 158.

²⁶ *God*, 168.

²⁷ *God*, 190-191. Cf. Augustine, *Lex Aeterna* and Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 93, a. 1.

²⁸ *VS*, 42. Cf. *GS*, 17.

God's revelation shows the superiority of the law of love, for he himself is love. According to John Paul, "Love means precisely this—to will the good, to adhere to the good. From this eternal will of the Good there gushes forth the infinite goodness of God in regard to creatures and, in particular, in regard to man. Love is the origin of God's clemency, of his readiness to give freely and to pardon."²⁹ Likewise, in the greatest commandment, "You shall love" the human finds a "precise expression of the singular dignity of the human person" because it reveals the goodness of true humanity implied by this essential duty.³⁰

God the Creator Gives Dignity

The fact that humanity is created by God, in the image of God, reveals the unique dignity of human persons. This section will first examine the significance of God in himself, God as being. Then we will turn to God's loving creation of the world and the extension of his being to human persons. By his special creation of humans in his image, God has conferred a profound dignity to humanity. We will examine the moral implications of this dignity.

The Being and Mystery of God

In his catechesis on God, John Paul examines the first article of the creed, "I believe in God the Father almighty, creator..." This article affirms belief that God has made himself known to human persons; he is a personal God who has "revealed himself and made known the hidden purpose of his will."³¹ This belief in God expresses the conviction that *God exists*, for only one who really exists can reveal himself.³² John Paul said, "*He who is* expresses the very essence of God, which is self-

²⁹ *God*, 192.

³⁰ *VS*, 13. John Paul explained regarding this commandment, "We find a precise expression of the singular dignity of the human person, 'the only creature that God has wanted for its own sake' (GS, 24). The different commandments of the Decalogue are really only so many reflections of the one commandment about the good of the person, at the level of the many different goods which characterise his identity as a spiritual and bodily being in relationship with God, with his neighbour and with the material world. As we read the Catechism of the catholic Church, 'the Ten Commandments are part of God's Revelation. At the same time, they teach us man's true humanity. They shed light on the essential duties, and so indirectly on the fundamental rights, inherent in the nature of the human person.'" *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1994), No. 2070.

³¹ *God*, 110. *DV*, 2.

³² The existence of God is accessible to human reason because God makes himself visible through his works. The Psalmist writes, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God" (Ps. 19:2). In addition, the existence of God through faith has a rational character which reason can investigate. *God*, 114-116.

existence, subsistent Being.”³³ Because he is subsisting being (*esse subsistens*), God cannot not be, he is necessary being. The things that receive existence from God are contingent beings. Being does not constitute their essence.³⁴ As the absolute fullness of Being, God is completely transcendent in regard to the world; he is the God of infinite majesty before whom humans bend in humility and adoration.³⁵

John Paul said, “The essence of God—which is the divinity—is found to be outside every category of genus and species which we use in our definitions. So the essence of God cannot be enclosed in any definition. If, in our thought about God, with the category of ‘being,’ we use the analogy of being, with this we bring out the ‘non-resemblance’ much more than the resemblance. We bring out the incomparability much more than the comparability of God with the creature.”³⁶ As discussed in the previous chapter, in the tradition of the Catholic church, the *analogia entis* provided the basis for humans to gain knowledge about God. In this doctrine, however, John Paul emphasised the difference and the inability of the human to totally comprehend God in his majesty. He wrote, “The human intellect, inasmuch as it possesses a certain idea of God, and although it has been elevated significantly, through the revelation of the Old and New Covenant, to a deeper and more complete knowledge of his mystery, is unable to comprehend God adequately and exhaustively.”³⁷ Thus, while the analogy of being gives humans access to knowledge of God’s existence and to his essence (to some degree), the revelation of God in scripture is necessary for a more complete knowledge, because of the “non-resemblance” of God’s majesty. Yet even scripture does not provide the complete knowledge of God, for while he is known he is also incomprehensible.³⁸

God’s Extension of Himself in Love

According to John Paul, God has revealed himself as eternity and as the fullness of life, the Spirit who is immense and invisible. He wrote, “As an infinitely perfect spirit he is the absolute fullness of Truth and Goodness, and he desires to give himself.

³³ *God*, 117.

³⁴ *God*, 120.

³⁵ *God*, 121.

³⁶ *God*, 123.

³⁷ *God*, 123.

³⁸ *God*, 125. Echoes Karol Wojtyla’s studies of St. John of the Cross.

Goodness extends itself: *bonum est diffusivum sui*.³⁹ He extended himself to humankind through covenant: first with Adam and Eve, then with Noah, with Abraham, and finally in Jesus Christ.⁴⁰ He extended himself first in creation and then in redemption because God is Love. According to John Paul, "the truth that God is love constitutes the apex of all that has been revealed."⁴¹

God's creation demonstrates his wisdom moved by love. He created heaven and earth; everything existing outside of God has been called into existence or made of out nothing by him. Because the creature has been created by God, God is in the creature and the creature is in him. Yet this immanence does not diminish God's transcendence.⁴²

Creation is the work of the Trinity, the creation of the world is the work of Love. John Paul said, "A created gift, the universe springs from the Uncreated Gift [the Holy Spirit], from the reciprocal Love of the Father and Son, from the Most Holy Trinity."⁴³ The revelation of the wisdom and of the love of God is the first and principle end of creation.⁴⁴

The Imago Dei as the Basis for Dignity

Within this beloved creation, humans have special dignity because they are created in the image of God. The human is the creature who God chose for himself, in his openness to integration and social communion.⁴⁵ John Paul explains,

Man is created for immortality. He does not cease to be the image of God after sin, even though he is subjected to death. He bears in himself the reflection of God's power, which is manifested especially in the faculty of intelligence and free will. Man is an autonomous subject. He

³⁹ *God*, 135. From *Summa Theologia* I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 2.

⁴⁰ *God*, 140-141. JP writes, "The God of the covenant is the God 'who gives himself' in a mysterious way—the God of revelation and the God of grace. He not only makes himself known to man, but he makes him a sharer in the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4)."

⁴¹ *God*, 144.

⁴² "As Creator, God is in a certain sense 'outside' of created being and what is created is 'outside' of God. At the same time the creature fully and completely owes to God its own existence (its being what it is), because the creature has its origin fully and completely from the power of God. Through this creative power (omnipotence) God is in the creature and the creature is in him. However, this divine immanence in no way diminishes God's transcendence in regard to everything to which he gives existence." *God*, 202.

⁴³ *God*, 211.

⁴⁴ *God*, 215.

⁴⁵ *DV*, 43.

is the source of his own actions, while maintaining the characteristics of dependence upon God, the Creator (ontological contingency).⁴⁶

Thus, the human person is the glory of the Creator and he has been created to become a mouthpiece of God's glory. According to John Paul, the *imago Dei* is the basis of the special dignity of human life and the foundation for human morality.⁴⁷

The Moral Significance of the Imago Dei

In relation to creatures, the *imago Dei* means that the human is called into existence as subject; she is endowed with intellectual consciousness and freedom. Each human has within herself an essential relation to truth that determines her character as a transcendent being. She is capable of discernment between truth and non-truth.

In addition, the human has freedom of her will. John Paul said, "Human acts bear within themselves the sign of self-determination of will and of choice. The whole sphere of morality derives from this. Man is capable of choosing between good and evil, sustained in this by the voice of conscience, which impels him to good and restrains him from evil."⁴⁸ Thus the divine image inscribes both freedom and truth in the structure of the human person and from these aspects of humanity, the sphere of morality is derived.

In his discussion of truth and freedom in *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul argued that there could be no morality without freedom. "Genuine freedom is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image in man. For God willed to leave man 'in the power of his counsel' (Sir. 15:14) so that he would seek his Creator of his own accord and would freely arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God."⁴⁹

Does John Paul's notion of freedom mean that a human person determines what is morally right or wrong according to "his own counsel"? Certainly not, for *Veritatis Splendor* reacts against this very separation of morality from theology.⁵⁰ In that

⁴⁶ *God*, 223.

⁴⁷ *DV*, 36. See also *VS*, 13 and *God*, 224. Essential to the elements of the image of God in humanity are "the capacity for self-knowledge, the experience of man's own being in the world, the need to fill his solitude, his dependence on God." *God*, 223.

⁴⁸ *God*, 232-3.

⁴⁹ *GS*, 17; *VS*, 34.

⁵⁰ In his essay, "Natural Law and Catholic Moral Thinking," Russell Hittinger traced the connection between moral doctrine and theology in the early Catholic church, up to its disconnection in the modern era. He argues that the primary purpose of *Veritatis Splendor* was to reconnect the foundations of moral theology with theology. In *A Preserving Grace*, Michael Cromartie, ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 2-26.

encyclical, John Paul argues that freedom is dependent upon truth. God alone decides what is good and what is evil. A human person is free because he can understand, accept, and obey God's commands.⁵¹ Thus, John Paul believes that there is a natural moral law authored by God. These moral norms are "rational—thus universally understandable and communicable."⁵² The human person does not establish moral norms for himself. Rather, he participates in the eternal law of God.

John Paul defined the *natural law* as "nothing other than the light of understanding infused in us by God, whereby we understand what must be done and what must be avoided—God gave this light and this law to man at creation."⁵³ Elsewhere he explained the connection of natural law with creation, "The natural moral law expresses and lays down the purposes, rights, and duties which are based upon the bodily and spiritual nature of the human person. Therefore this law cannot be thought of as simply a set of norms on the biological level, rather it must be defined as the rational order whereby man is called by his Creator to direct and regulate his life and actions and in particular to make use of his own body."⁵⁴ The human's genuine moral autonomy means the acceptance of this moral law and obedience to it. Does this law imply moral heteronomy? John Paul argues that it does not because (1) the norms are not imposed but infused in his being and (2) each human is held responsible for his own self-determination.

Praxis: Participation in God's Kingdom

One final emphasis of John Paul's Doctrine of God is God's divine providence established in the coming of his Kingdom. According to John Paul, divine providence refers to the presence and activity of God in the world and in the history of every creature. Scripture is the supreme document of God's providence because it manifests

⁵¹ *VS*, 35. "Revelation teaches that the power to decide what is good and what is evil does not belong to man, but to God alone. The man is certainly free, inasmuch as he can understand and accept God's commands. And he possesses an extremely far-reaching freedom, since he can eat "of every tree of the garden". But his freedom is not unlimited: it must halt before the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' for it is called to accept the moral law given by God. In fact, human freedom finds its authentic and complete fulfilment precisely in the acceptance of that law."

⁵² *VS*, 36.

⁵³ *VS*, 40. Quoted from Thomas Aquinas, in *Duo Praecepta Caritatis et in Decem Legis Praecepta. Prologus: Opuscula Theologica*, II, No. 1129, Ed. Taurinen. (1954), 245.

⁵⁴ *VS*, 50. Quoted from The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation *Donum Vitae* (Feb 22, 1987), Introduction, 3: AAS80 (1988), 74.

God's intervention in nature by creation and by redemption, loving man and calling him to participate in His plan. One aspect of God's providence is his "conservation", namely by "maintaining in existence all that has had being from nothing."⁵⁵ Secondly, divine providence carries out an eternal plan of wisdom and love by governing the created world and "the ways of human society."⁵⁶ He has given creatures autonomy through their "dominion" over the world. By participating in the Creator's dominion, man becomes "in a certain sense 'providence' for himself, according to the beautiful expression of St. Thomas."⁵⁷ Thus, humans have a particular responsibility before God and creatures, especially their fellow humans.

John Paul then posed the question, "If God is present and operating in everything, how can man be free?" He calls this meeting point of God's plan with human freedom a mystery. The human person is called upon to develop the world through her work. Her ethical work, in particular, brings the Kingdom of God to fulfilment in the created world. However, God permits human sin which opposes his plan and which is the consequence of the abuse of created freedom.⁵⁸

God resolved this abuse by choosing human persons to participate in the sonship of Christ by grace, even before he willed creation. God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."⁵⁹ Thus, his divine providence is expressed in the eternal plan of salvation.

How is evil understood in light of this divine providence? John Paul distinguished physical evil (natural disasters or physical disability) from moral evil. Moral evil depends on free will and implies guilt. While God does not will evil, he tolerates it in view of a greater good.⁶⁰ This good is redemption and salvation through the cross of Christ. As will be discussed in greater detail in further sections, Christ embraced the suffering of humanity caused by evil and he overcame evil itself. Divine providence must be understood within the whole context of God's predestination and

⁵⁵ *God*, 244.

⁵⁶ *God*, 250, quoted from *DH* 3.

⁵⁷ *God*, 252. Cf. *Summa Theologica* I, 22, 2, ad 4.

⁵⁸ *God*, 257-60.

⁵⁹ *God*, 263-4. Quotation from 1 Timothy 2:4.

⁶⁰ *God*, 270-272.

salvation and its realisation in human history. God has eternally intended to realise the Kingdom of God in the history of this world, upon the basis of Christ.⁶¹

These beliefs have clear implications for the human person's task as "investigator and ruler of the forces of nature."⁶² As the world evolves and human persons seek to progress, the problem of sin "jumbles" the order of values and the world ceases to be a place of true brotherhood. Thus, the human needs to acknowledge God and to will the moral progress of humanity in order to create a "more human" world. John Paul quoted from *Gaudium et Spes*:

While earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of God's Kingdom, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God. For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed of all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the father: 'a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.' On this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower.⁶³

God's Spirit directs the unfolding of time and he acts in history. With the help of God's grace, each human co-operates in this growth of the Kingdom, towards the historical and eschatological fulfilment of the plan of divine Providence.⁶⁴

Conclusion: The Doctrine of God and Human Dignity

In conclusion to this section on God the Father, John Paul argued that a profound dignity is conferred upon humanity on account of the *imago Dei*. This doctrine, built upon the concept of God's triune being, first means that humans are capable of knowing the truth and distinguishing between good and evil through natural reason. This reason is not independent from revelation as John Paul explained, "man is able to recognise good and evil thanks to that discernment of good from evil which he himself carried out by Divine Revelation and by faith, through the law that God gave to the chosen people."⁶⁵

⁶¹ *God*, 277.

⁶² *God*, 283.

⁶³ *GS*, 39.

⁶⁴ *God*, 287-288.

⁶⁵ *VS*, 42.

Second, the *imago Dei* means that human are autonomous; they may "freely do good or avoid evil."⁶⁶ The legitimate autonomy of creation, however, involves obedience to the will of the Creator, the origin of moral law. He quoted from *Gaudium et Spes*:

If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy. Such is not merely required by modern man, but harmonises also with the will of the Creator. For by the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws, and order.⁶⁷

The human participates creatively in the legitimate autonomy of earthly things to the extent that he seeks to "discover, exploit and order" the laws and values of the cosmos.⁶⁸ Humans practice legitimate autonomy through obedience to the Creator and in accordance with the laws endowed by him, which are accessible to human reason.⁶⁹ Thus, people create a "more human" world by working in obedience to the moral law and, by implication, in participation with God's divine providence.

Theological Basis:

Raised to a Dignity Beyond Compare in Jesus Christ

According to John Paul, the *imago Dei* reveals the intrinsic dignity of humanity and brought humans into participation with God's providential reign, in service to humanity. Yet the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has raised humans to a dignity beyond any comparison. Jesus Christ, the son of God became a human person of history. The incarnation of the son of God established human dignity; his mission of salvation affirmed human dignity; and the redemption wrought by him brought humans into a familial relation with God, as daughters and sons, participants in the sonship of Jesus Christ and people who live in the likeness of Christ's human model. This second section will explore these implications of the person and work of Christ for John Paul's anthropology. First, however, we examine the problem that

⁶⁶ *VS*, 42.

⁶⁷ *GS*, 36; Affirmed by John Paul in *God*, 216-217.

⁶⁸ *God*, 219; Cf. *GS*, 36. Must discuss later what Barth was opposing when argued that humans are only autonomous in Christ and compare this to JP's understanding of autonomy.

⁶⁹ *God*, 218. JP wrote, "Therefore, if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith. For earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God."

necessitated Christ's life and work and that perpetuates acts of injustice: the problem of human sin.

The Mystery of Sin

According to John Paul, "sin robs man, in various ways, of the decisive element of his true dignity—that of the dignity and likeness of God."⁷⁰ Scripture describes the first sin in the story of creation. In the visible world, each human received his existence as a gift—"as the 'image and likeness of God,' a rational being, endowed with intellect and will."⁷¹ The human person was originally innocent and righteous because he possessed sanctifying grace and supernatural gifts from God.⁷² From the beginning, the Creator revealed himself as (1) God of the covenant, of friendship and happiness and (2) the source of good and the source of distinguishing between good and evil.⁷³ However, the human, by his free choice, rejected the truth of God's command; in pride he rebelled against the truth of his existence, the subordination of creature to Creator; by yielding to the temptation to be "like God," the human became slave and accomplice to rebellious spirits.⁷⁴ John Paul explained the concept of sin as the choice of self over God, "*contemptus Dei*, rejection of God, contempt of God, hatred of everything connected with God or that comes from God."⁷⁵

What does John Paul understand to be the impact of sin upon individuals and society?

1. The Universality of Sin in Human History. Through the original sin of Adam, sin "invaded" the whole world and infected all of humanity.⁷⁶
2. The Hereditary Character of Sin. This sinful situation is repeated from generation to generation in personal and social life. "The sin of Adam, which by origin is unique and transmitted by generation and not by way of imitation is present in all and proper to each."⁷⁷ Because of Adam's sin, man is "conceived and born without sanctifying grace.

⁷⁰ *Jesus, Son, and Saviour: A Catechesis on the Creed*. Vol. 2. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1996), 69.

⁷¹ *Jesus*, 23.

⁷² *Jesus*, 24.

⁷³ *Jesus*, 25; Genesis 2:16-17.

⁷⁴ *Jesus*, 30-31.

⁷⁵ *Jesus*, 31.

⁷⁶ *Jesus*, 33.

⁷⁷ *Jesus*, 45.

It is precisely this 'initial state' of man, linked to his origin, that constitutes the essence of original sin as a legacy."⁷⁸

3. The Interiority of Sin. The root of sin is in the interior of the person, in his conscience and in his heart. "Examining his heart, man finds that he has inclination toward evil too, and is engulfed by manifold ills which cannot come from his good Creator."⁷⁹

4. The Human Person's Loss of Sanctifying Grace. John Paul wrote, "Man in the beginning (in the state of original justice) spoke to the Creator with friendship and confidence in the whole truth of his spiritual—corporeal being, created in God's image. But now he has lost the basis of that friendship and covenant. He has lost the grace of sharing in God's life the good of belonging to him in the holiness of the original relationship of subordination and sonship."⁸⁰ According to John Paul, "Original sin in Adam's descendants does not have the character of personal guilt."⁸¹ Rather, through the privation of sanctifying grace, human nature has been diverted from its supernatural end, and the holiness and justice in which they were constituted from the beginning was lost.⁸²

5. The Mortal Consequence of Sin. The result of their sin was the punishment of death as we now know it.⁸³

6. Implications of Sin for Human Morality. The deterioration of the human's physical nature is paralleled by the deterioration of his spiritual faculties, the darkening of the intellect's capacity to know truth and the weakening of free will to choose the good.

John Paul explained:

According to the Church's teaching, it is a case of a relative and not an absolute deterioration, not intrinsic to the human faculties. Even after original sin, man can know by his intellect the fundamental natural and religious truths, and the moral principles. He can also perform good works. One should therefore speak rather of a darkening of the intellect and of a weakening of the will, of 'wounds' of the spiritual and sensitive

⁷⁸ *Jesus*, 46.

⁷⁹ *Jesus*, 36; Quoted from *GS*, 13.

⁸⁰ *Jesus*, 40.

⁸¹ *Jesus*, 45.

⁸² *Jesus*, 41, 45.

⁸³ *Jesus*, 41.

faculties, and not of a loss of their essential capacities, even in relation to the knowledge and love of God.⁸⁴

According to John Paul, this doctrine, affirmed by the Council of Trent, opposes the Lutheran account of sin. "The Council of Trent teaches that as a result of Adam's sin, man has not lost free will. He can therefore perform acts which have an authentic moral value—good or evil."⁸⁵ Why, then, was Christ necessary? John Paul explained "Without Christ's help, fallen man is incapable of directing himself to the supernatural goods which constitute his total fulfilment and salvation."⁸⁶

Because of sin, human nature bears a "spark of sin," or "concupiscence" which inclines the human person to evil and is the source of the inclination to personal (or actual) sin. John Paul explained that the "spark" of sin "continues in man justified by Christ, therefore even after holy Baptism."⁸⁷ The contrast between the moral dimension of the Catholic doctrine of sin and Barth's Protestant interpretation will be compared in greater detail in the final chapter. Of most importance for our present purposes is John Paul's emphasis that after the fall, humans retain free will. Sin is an act of the person, "a conscious and free act—which is opposed to the moral norm (to God's will), to the law, to the commandment, and ultimately to conscience."⁸⁸

7. The Social Dimension of Sin. Because of the "spark" left by original sin, many personal sins are committed. These form an "environment of sin" which creates conditions for new sins and attracts other humans to sin. Human initiatives, institutions, cultures, and social environments are also "infected" by this sin. They bear the imprint of sin.⁸⁹ Thus, every human sin is a social sin because it affects others in the same way.

John Paul located the solution to this problem in Jesus Christ, the Son and the Saviour. His writings concern themselves with the person of Christ in his identity, with the mission of Christ in bringing salvation to the world and with Christ's redemptive work. We will look at these three aspects of Christ as they affirm human dignity.

⁸⁴ *Jesus*, 51-52.

⁸⁵ *Jesus*, 52.

⁸⁶ *Jesus*, 52.

⁸⁷ *Jesus*, 52.

⁸⁸ *Jesus*, 63.

⁸⁹ *Jesus*, 64.

The Identity of Christ: True God and True Human

In affirmation of the Nicene Creed, John Paul believed that Christ recognised himself as the true God and the true Man. He proclaimed himself to be God.⁹⁰ John confirmed his full divinity in the prologue to his gospel in which he declared Christ's divine pre-existence.⁹¹ As God the Son who is con-substantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Christ claimed divine attributes such as truth, life, redeemer, judge, lawgiver, object of faith, and forgiver of sins.⁹²

According to John Paul, Jesus is also the true human. Through incarnation, he took flesh and human nature. He grew and became strong, suffered fatigue, torture, and death, and he returned to life in his own human body through the resurrection. As *Gaudium et Spes* confirmed, "By his Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human person. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin."⁹³

According to John Paul, the incarnation reveals the great dignity of humans. First, his assumption of humanity (rather than his absorption of humanity) united Christ with each human, raising humans to "a dignity beyond compare."⁹⁴ Second, though he was without sin, Jesus sought the company of sinners because of his love for humanity and his mission to bring salvation to the world. He voluntarily emptied himself so that he could restore humans to their original dignity.⁹⁵ We turn now to examine his mission more fully.

The Mission of Jesus Christ in History

From his birth into human history, Jesus became the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation for his people, Israel, the people of which Jesus is a son. Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophesies and the covenant of God in the history of salvation; he brought about the transition from the "old" to the "new" by bringing the law to fulfilment.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ See 'I am' statements of John 8, Mt. 28, and Luke 24.

⁹¹ *Jesus*, 212.

⁹² *Jesus*, 216-243.

⁹³ *GS* 22; *Jesus*, 300.

⁹⁴ *DV*, 8.

⁹⁵ *Jesus*, 310-312.

⁹⁶ *Jesus*, 105-106.

Christ marked this transition as the messiah (the "anointed" sent by God), fulfilling the threefold office of the old covenant: King, Priest, and Prophet. Thus, Christ fulfilled the messianic plan outlined in the Old Testament by coming "as true man among men," a son of Israel.⁹⁷

Yet this human person, Jesus, was also the Son of God, chosen by God and entrusted for a particular mission.⁹⁸ He is a representative of God and a Son of God, not in the metaphorical sense but in a natural sense. As the divine Son, Jesus revealed the Father.⁹⁹ God himself speaks of himself through the Son. The prologue of John's gospel provides the decisive point of faith: "The Word became flesh and came to dwell among us."¹⁰⁰ John Paul used the Nicene confession to affirm his "faith in the Son of God, who is 'one in being with the Father' as eternal Word, eternally 'begotten,' 'God from God and Light from Light,' in no way created."¹⁰¹ Thus, the Son existed in intimate union with the Father, in unity of essence, and sent into the world for a particular mission and ministry.

The mission with which Christ was entrusted concerned the salvation of humanity. This saving mission was carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit. John Paul wrote, "Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was sent into the world by the Father, became man by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth. As man, he fulfilled his messianic mission unto the cross and resurrection, in the power of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰² After fulfilling this mission, he returned to the Father and he sent upon the church the same Spirit. Thus, his mission revealed the Trinity, the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, in the history of Israel and humankind.

Christ's Mission as Prophet

In his description of the mission of Christ on behalf of humanity, John Paul focused upon his *prophetic* and *kingly* offices.¹⁰³ As *prophet*, Christ came to proclaim

⁹⁷ *Jesus*, 145.

⁹⁸ *Jesus*, 146.

⁹⁹ *Jesus*, 150-152.

¹⁰⁰ *Jesus*, 164.

¹⁰¹ *Jesus*, 165.

¹⁰² *Jesus*, 196.

¹⁰³ While the priesthood of Christ does play a role in John Paul's description of the mission of Christ, he only mentions the priesthood twice in his catechises on redemption and he does not link the priesthood with human dignity. Thus, I would disagree with Avery Dulles' statement that the priesthood plays a

the Good News so that people could believe in him and be saved. The good news is God's gift of grace and truth, it is Christ himself. John Paul wrote, "Those who believed in him followed what he preached, but still more they followed the preacher. They followed Jesus because he offered the 'words of life'"¹⁰⁴ He testified to the truth of God and God's love for humanity, realised in Jesus Christ. Regarding this prophetic revelation of Christ, John Paul quoted *Dominum et Vivificantem*:

He perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making himself present and manifesting himself: through his words and deeds, his signs and wonders, but especially through his death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth. Moreover he confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed, that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal.¹⁰⁵

Thus, Christ fulfilled the prophetic office through his proclamation of God, manifest in his incarnation, life, death, and resurrection.

Christ's Mission as King

In his *kingly* office, Christ announced and established the Kingdom of God. John Paul explained that with his "'obedience unto death,"¹⁰⁶ Jesus began a new phase of the economy of salvation, whose process will end when God will be 'all in all.'¹⁰⁷ Therefore the Kingdom of God has truly begun to be realised in the history of humanity and of the world."¹⁰⁸ In the tradition of the Catholic church, John Paul linked the Kingdom of God to the paschal mystery in which sin was conquered and Christ became victorious over Satan's power in the world and in human lives.¹⁰⁹ For Christ not only announced the Kingdom, he also eliminated the essential obstacle to its realisation: sin.¹¹⁰ He liberates humanity from the evil of sin, rooted by heredity in humanity.

strong role in John Paul's understanding of the redemption. Due to limitations on space and the relatively small role John Paul attributed to it, we will not include an examination of the priesthood of Christ. Avery Dulles, 36.

¹⁰⁴ *Jesus*, 347.

¹⁰⁵ *Jesus*, 362.

¹⁰⁶ *Jesus*, 349 and 253. Phil. 2:8.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Cor. 15:28.

¹⁰⁸ *Jesus*, 349.

¹⁰⁹ *Jesus*, 255, 369.

¹¹⁰ *Jesus*, 390.

Through his death and resurrection, salvation takes its beginning and the liberation of the Kingdom of God has begun its realisation in human history.¹¹¹

This Kingdom extends to all people and it is not political, but its growth takes place in the field of human hearts.¹¹² According to John Paul, liberation in the social and political sense is not the true messianic mission of Christ. However, without the work of Christ in the heart, without the liberation from sin and egoism, liberation in the socio-political sense is not possible. "Not merely external change of structures brings about a true liberation of society, as long as man is subject to sin and lies, as long as the passions hold sway, and with them exploitation and the various forms of oppression."¹¹³

The constitutional basis for this Kingdom is the New Law, the law of love. All are called and invited into this Kingdom but each person is responsible for accepting or refusing the invitation, for his conformity or lack of conformity with this law.¹¹⁴ Thus, the Kingdom of God requires this new justice; it requires commitment expressed in the doing of God's will.¹¹⁵

The Kingdom of God is now present in the world through the followers of Christ, through the church.¹¹⁶ Christ handed over the Kingdom that he had established to the apostles and gave them the authority to make disciples, affirming their dignity by this mission.¹¹⁷ The significance of this Kingdom for the economic and political spheres will be developed at a later point in this chapter. Having examined the person of Christ and the mission of Christ, we now turn the third theme that reveals the surpassing dignity of humanity: Christ's work of redemption.

The Mystery of Redemption

The redemption wrought by Christ restored dignity to humanity because it freed humans from the destructive nature of sin and restored meaning to human life, as life

¹¹¹ *Jesus*, 393-4.

¹¹² *Jesus*, 350-351.

¹¹³ *Jesus*, 399.

¹¹⁴ *Jesus*, 353.

¹¹⁵ *Jesus*, 134.

¹¹⁶ *Jesus*, 255, 369.

¹¹⁷ *DM*, 16 and *Jesus*, 376. John Paul claims that the Church-Kingdom of God is endowed with a ministerial and sacramental structure.

with God.¹¹⁸ John Paul named two dimensions of redemption: divine and human. The divine aspect focuses upon the depth of God's love and mercy expressed in the sacrifice of the Son. This dimension is of importance for our study because it reveals the significance of the cross for the human person and human justice and because it reveals the new way of life opened up to humanity through the resurrection that followed. In our examination of the divine dimension, we will pay special attention to the concepts of justification and participation because they are key doctrines that will differ with Protestant conceptions of justice and morality. The second dimension echoes Wojtyla's early personalist interests because it deals with human assimilation of this new reality.¹¹⁹ The human discovers her dignity by realising her unity with God in Christ. We now turn to examine these two dimensions.

The Divine Dimension of Redemption

The primary theme of the divine dimension of redemption is the love and mercy of God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ the Son. God, made manifest in Christ, serves as the reference point for the dignity of the human; the human cannot be fully understood apart from Christ. What truths of the redemption are vital for understanding the human person? How does Christ's redemption affect the human person as she relates to society? First, Christ reveals God's love and mercy in a new way. This love restores dignity to humans. Secondly, this merciful redemption grants participation in the life of God.

The Significance of the Cross: Mercy and Justice

"Why Christ's cross?" John Paul asked. Christ's sacrifice fulfilled God's design of love. Because he loves the world, he gave himself for the sins of the world. "The 'price' of our redemption" John Paul explained, "is likewise a further proof of the value that God himself sets on man and of our dignity in Christ."¹²⁰ The cross also reveals the love that overcomes justice:

It is a question of love which surpasses justice. Justice can investigate and catch up with the transgressor. If an innocent person who is holy,

¹¹⁸ DV, 10.

¹¹⁹ Beigel, 40. And DM, 7.

¹²⁰ DV, 20.

like Christ, is sentenced to suffering and death on a cross to fulfil the Father's eternal design, it means that, in sacrificing his Son, God goes in a certain sense beyond the order of justice. He reveals himself in the Son, and, through him, all the riches of his mercy—*dives in misericordia*¹²¹—as if to introduce, together with his crucified and risen Son, his mercy, his merciful love, in the story of the relations between God and man.¹²²

God's mercy was manifest in the Old Testament. And the Old Testament teaches that love is "greater" than justice in the sense that love is primary and fundamental. Love conditions justice and justice serves love.¹²³ However, the cross of Christ introduces the mercy of God to a new degree because God has given his very self for the sin of humanity.

Christ came "to give his life as a ransom for many."¹²⁴ As the one who had committed no sin, he gave his life as a substitution for humanity, to free all from sin. In what sense is this substitution redemptive? John Paul contrasted his interpretation of substitution with the Reformed understanding:

What confers on substitution its redemptive value is not the material fact that an innocent person has suffered the chastisement deserved by the guilty and that justice has thus in some way been satisfied (in such a case one should speak rather of a grave injustice.) The redemptive value comes instead from the fact that the innocent Jesus, out of pure love, entered into solidarity with the guilty and thus transformed their situation from within.¹²⁵

In other words, John Paul's interpretation of the cross takes a very different form than Protestant Christology. For John Paul, when Christ took on the sin of humanity out of pure love, the catastrophic situation of sin "is no longer under the sign of opposition to God."¹²⁶ On the contrary, the situation caused by sin becomes a sign of docility to the love that comes from God. Thus, the substitution of Christ overcomes "every negation and contrariety linked with human sin in every dimension—interior and historical—in which this sin has weighed on the relationship of man with God."¹²⁷ In this manner, love conditions justice and justice serves love.

¹²¹ Cf. Eph 2:4.

¹²² *Jesus*, 426.

¹²³ *DM*, 4.

¹²⁴ *Jesus*, 445.

¹²⁵ *Jesus*, 445.

¹²⁶ *Jesus*, 445.

¹²⁷ *Jesus*, 446.

John Paul's interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son sheds further light on this relation of justice and mercy. When the son seeks to return to the father's house as a slave, he has recognised that, in accordance with the norms of justice, he no longer has any right as a son but that his father may receive him as a servant. Through his actions, he was deprived of his dignity as a son according to the norms of justice.¹²⁸ However, when the son returned the father rejoiced because he saw that the good of his son's humanity had been saved. The father's mercy has the interior form of love. "This love is able to reach down to every prodigal son, to every human misery, and above all to every form of moral misery, to sin. When this happens, the person who is the object of mercy does not feel humiliated, but rather found again and 'restored to value.'"¹²⁹ Therefore, love overcomes and conditions justice. Through the love extended by God to humanity, manifested in the uttermost expression of love—gift of self—injustice has been overcome and the dignity of the human has been restored. Through his mercy, God justifies the human person by restoring to justice that salvific order which God willed from the beginning.¹³⁰

In conclusion to the question, "Why the cross?", John Paul located its significance in the immensity of God's love made manifest through it.¹³¹ John Paul quoted Aquinas, "In this way man knows how much God loves him, and man on his part is induced to love him in return; in this love consists the perfection of human salvation."¹³² In other words, the overwhelming love of Christ initiates a relationship of love through which the human enters a new relation with God, re-establishing the dignity that was lost by sin.¹³³

Participation

The resurrection of Christ, in which the cross reaches its full significance, opened a new way of life for humanity. John Paul differentiated between the order of creation and the order of redemption:

¹²⁸ *DM*, 5.

¹²⁹ *DM*, 6.

¹³⁰ *DM*, 7.

¹³¹ "Without Christ's suffering and death, God's love for humanity would not have been manifested in all its depth and immensity." *Jesus*, 442.

¹³² *Jesus*, 442. Quotation from Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 46, a. 3.

¹³³ *DM*, 6.

God, as Christ has revealed Him, does not merely remain closely linked with the world as the Creator and ultimate source of existence. He is Father: He is linked to man, whom He called to existence in the visible world, by a bond still more intimate than that of creation. It is love which not only creates the good but also grants participation in the very life of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹³⁴

Through the cross, the human becomes a sharer in the truth and life, which is in God and comes from God. Through the cross and resurrection, God fulfilled the covenant of love by adopting as his children, not only Israel, but all nations and peoples.¹³⁵

While Christ's death liberated humans from sin, the resurrection effected this freedom and the dignity of adoption into a new life.¹³⁶ This adoption brings an true freedom to the person, "not merely on the level of legal access to the inheritance, but with the real gift of divine life which the three Persons of the Trinity *infuse* into man."¹³⁷ Participation in the new life enables men and women to become brothers and sisters of Christ, not by nature, but by the gift of grace, "since this adoptive sonship gives a true and real participation in the life of the only-begotten son, who is revealed fully in his resurrection."¹³⁸ Ultimately, the resurrection of Christ is the source for our future resurrection.¹³⁹

Because Christ has given his life in love for humans, humans are called to participate in this divine life by giving of themselves to God.¹⁴⁰ For instance, in the same way that Christ showed mercy and humans obtained the mercy of Christ, humans also give mercy back to Christ in the "wonderful exchange." For Christ said, "As you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me."¹⁴¹ John Paul challenges, "Could man's dignity be more highly respected and ennobled, for, in obtaining mercy, He is in a sense the one who at the same time 'shows mercy'?"¹⁴²

¹³⁴ *DM*, 7.

¹³⁵ *DM*, 7.

¹³⁶ *Jesus*, 519-521.

¹³⁷ *Jesus*, 521. John Paul's conception of infused life raises an important question regarding the impersonal nature of this participation. If grace and life are indeed personal and determined by God's own giving of himself, the conception of "infused grace" or "infused life" potentially depersonalises God's gift of himself by abstracting his gift.

¹³⁸ *Jesus*, 521.

¹³⁹ *Jesus*, 521-523.

¹⁴⁰ *DM*, 7.

¹⁴¹ *DM*, 8. From Mt. 25:40.

¹⁴² *DM*, 8.

Because of this doctrine of participation, John Paul placed such an emphasis on Christ as the model for human life. By knowing Christ as model, humans discover what sonship looks like so that they might become like Christ. However, vital to understanding this participation as effected by the paschal mystery is the fact that mercy begins with God; life begins with Christ; the Trinity is the source of man's moral life.

John Paul was not working out of a punitive interpretation of salvation, in which Christ took the wrath of God onto himself and transformed the human believer from an unjust state to a just state. John Paul's interpretation of redemption does not require this drastic intervention by God in which Christ transforms human nature from a state of sin in which a human could not choose God. Because John Paul believed that sin did not damage a human's capacity to choose God, the transformation which is required by redemption is more subtle and interior than Barth's. The transformation comes through God's gift of self, God's merciful love that transforms man by pulling him out of himself. For John Paul, the mercy of God changes humans by restoring the value that was marred by sin and selfishness. God's mercy "promotes and *draws good from all the forms of evil* existing in the world and in man."¹⁴³ When John Paul emphasises the model of Christ, therefore, he is not calling men and women to obey God or to do what Jesus did in order to earn salvation or obtain the favour of God. He not only believes that morality means obedience to God's law but he also believes that the source of obedience is from God—from his creation and redemption, from his original image and from the image restored and given new dignity in Christ. Unlike a more Protestant view, however, the mind and will of the human do not require complete re-creation in order to bring moral transformation. Rather, transformation takes place through participation in the life and mercy of Christ. The gift of Christ's self teaches humans to transcend the sin and evil of this world by giving of themselves to God and to one another. Through this gift of self, individuals and societies are transformed.

The Human Dimension of Redemption

In the mystery of redemption, "man finds again the greatness, dignity, and value that belong to his humanity," the human person becomes "newly 'expressed' and in a

¹⁴³ DM, 6.

way, is newly created" because she becomes one with Christ.¹⁴⁴ As the human draws near to Christ, she assimilates the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption and she becomes amazed in adoration of God and deep wonder at his humanity.¹⁴⁵ This amazement expresses the certainty of faith and it mysteriously gives life to the human as she recognises how precious and valuable she is, that God would give himself for human persons. John Paul explained, "The Redemption that took place through Christ has definitively restored his dignity to man and given back meaning to his life in the world, a meaning that was lost to a considerable extent because of sin."¹⁴⁶ Therefore, by revealing the dignity of the human in this new way, Christ reveals man to himself.

Through his Incarnation and Redemption, Christ has united himself with each person. God has chosen humans from eternity and destined all humans for grace. The church is responsible to display the union with Christ by living in unity and to proclaim the mystery of Christ, "in revealing the divine dimension and also the human dimension of the redemption, and in struggling with unwearying perseverance for the dignity that each human being has reached and can continually reach in Christ."¹⁴⁷ The church embraces this struggle by sharing in Christ's triple mission, his triple office of prophet, priest, and king.

As sharers in the mission of the prophet Christ, believers serve divine truth in the church and its proclamation in the world. The prophetic role of the church must be carried out in faith with complete fidelity to the truth of God.¹⁴⁸ Through this truth, persons learn to mature in love and justice as well as their sense of responsibility for this truth.¹⁴⁹ In his discussion of the priestly mission, John Paul emphasised the Eucharist and Penance through which we unite ourselves with Christ and grow to spiritual maturity and unity with all Christians.¹⁵⁰

Finally, John Paul located the service aspect of the Christian life in participation in the kingly office of Christ. Becoming a servant requires the maturity of kingship

¹⁴⁴ *RH*, 10.

¹⁴⁵ The 'amazement' regarding incarnation stems from the fact that human nature was assumed by Christ and thus "has been raised to a dignity beyond compare," *RH*, 8.

¹⁴⁶ *RH*, 10.

¹⁴⁷ *RH*, 11.

¹⁴⁸ He describes faith as "a specific supernatural virtue which is infused into the human spirit" which makes us sharers in the knowledge of God. *RH*, 19.

¹⁴⁹ *RH*, 19.

¹⁵⁰ *RH*, 20.

over ourselves and possession of the virtues that make this mastery possible. Through kingship, the Christian seeks to build up the Body of Christ by the unreserved giving of one's whole person to Christ and, with Christ, to humankind.¹⁵¹ This kingship also entails a dominion of the human over the visible world, a dominion that all people have in Christ.¹⁵² John Paul located in this kingly function important implications for the economic and political realms of society.

Anthropological Implications of the Doctrine of Christ

In conclusion, John Paul's Christology lays a basis for his anthropology. First, Christ solves the problem of the human inclination to sin that resulted from the fall. This sin constantly tempts the human to turn away from God and to seek an illusory freedom apart from the truth.¹⁵³ Yet the human still retains some light of God the Creator and she continues to ask the question, "What must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil?"¹⁵⁴ In Jesus Christ, God united himself with humanity because of his love for humans and his value on the dignity of human life. This great love draws human into relation with God, into truth, and into goodness. Through his love, Christ draws the good out of man and teaches humans to transcend the sin and selfishness of the world by giving themselves. Through the obedience of love and giving of themselves to God and to others, humans are transformed into the likeness of Christ. John Paul places a strong emphasis upon Christ as the model so that humans can learn what they themselves should do so that they might draw nearer to God, choose the good, and live in relationship with him. Like Christ, believers have been given the vocation of kingship over themselves and the world. This dominion is carried out after the model of Christ: through self-giving and upholding the dignity of human persons which was so profoundly affirmed in Christ.

¹⁵¹ *RH*, 21.

¹⁵² *RH*, 16.

¹⁵³ *VS*, 1.

¹⁵⁴ *VS*, 1.

Theological Basis:

Holy Spirit, Giver of Life and Love

In the same way that humans may lose their dignity by separating themselves from God through evil acts, John Paul believes that their sense of dignity can be realised through their moral formation.¹⁵⁵ He attributed to the Holy Spirit a primary role in the moral formation of personhood. Thus, following a brief summary of his pneumatology, we will explore the Spirit's role in moral formation with special regard to the conviction of sin. The third part will analyse the live giving aspect of the Spirit's role in moral formation.

The Spirit of the Father and Son, Given to the Church

During his final discourse at the last supper, Christ promised the disciples that he would send "another counsellor" (*parákletos*) when he left them. Christ explained, "The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."¹⁵⁶ Jesus taught them that the Spirit would reveal truth, would be a witness in the spreading of the gospel, and would guide the disciples. John Paul explained, "Thus, in the Holy Spirit-Paraclete, who in the mystery and action of the church unceasingly continues the historical presence on earth of the redeemer and his saving work, the glory of Christ shines forth, as the following words of John attest: 'He [the Spirit of truth] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.'"¹⁵⁷ John Paul emphasised that the Spirit does not simply replace Christ; Christ continues to be present and active through the Holy Spirit in the world.¹⁵⁸

As this verse demonstrates, the Spirit is a divine person who is vitally connected with the Father and with the Son. The one God revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Like the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is a divine person. "With the Father and the Son, he possesses creative power, and especially sanctifying and life-giving power in the supernatural order of grace."¹⁵⁹ The Holy Spirit was involved in the

¹⁵⁵ *DM*, 6-7 and *DV*, 16.

¹⁵⁶ John 14:26, *DV*, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *DV*, 7.

¹⁵⁸ Dulles, 26.

¹⁵⁹ *The Spirit, Giver of Life and Love: A Catechesis on the Creed*, Vol. 3. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1996), 296.

original creative work of God's self-giving, in Creation. John Paul wrote, "The biblical concept of creation includes not only the call to existence of the very being of the cosmos, that is to say the giving of existence, but also the presence of the Spirit of God in creation, that is to say the beginning of God's salvific self-communication to the things he creates."¹⁶⁰ Christ also linked the Holy Spirit with the mystery of Redemption, "the new beginning of God's salvific self-communication."¹⁶¹ The presence of sin in the world contradicted the Spirit of God in creation. When Christ departed, he sent his presence through the Spirit, through whom God communicated with the human in a new way. "And that you are children is proven by the fact that God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son who cries: 'Abba Father!'"¹⁶²

The Holy Spirit played a vital role in the mission of Christ. According to John Paul, the conception and birth of Christ are the greatest work accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit brought about the union of divine nature and human nature in the one Person of the Word-Son. John Paul explained

The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit laid the foundations for a new anthropology which sheds light on the greatness of human nature as reflected in Christ. In him, human nature reaches its highest point of union with god, 'having been conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that one and the same subject can be Son of God and Son of man.'¹⁶³

Thus, the Spirit, the uncreated Gift, the breath of life and love brought divine life in Christ. The Spirit is the ongoing source of the participation in divine life by humanity.

The Spirit was the author of the sanctification of Christ and he continues to sanctify humanity. Through the Incarnation, a new holiness entered the world. "By the power of the Holy Spirit, the holiness of the Son of Man constitutes the principal and lasting source of holiness in human and world history."¹⁶⁴ John Paul described the continued activity of the Spirit in the life and mission of Christ, culminating in the raising up of Christ in the Holy Spirit. "Christ, who was Son of God from the moment of his conception in Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, is 'constituted' as

¹⁶⁰ *DV*, 12.

¹⁶¹ *DV*, 13.

¹⁶² *DV*, 14, 22.

¹⁶³ *Spirit*, 206 and 209. Quotation from Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 2, a. 12, ad 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Spirit*, 211-213.

the source of life and holiness in the resurrection, 'full of sanctifying power,' by the action of the same Holy Spirit."¹⁶⁵

Christ then gives the Spirit to the apostles and all of humanity; this Spirit gives life through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. John Paul explained, "The Holy Spirit infuses new life into the Christian within the eschatological perspective of the future resurrection. There is a continuity between Christ's resurrection, the new life of Christians freed from sin and made sharers in the paschal mystery, and the future reconstitution of the body-soul union in the resurrection of the dead."¹⁶⁶ Following Christ's resurrection and ascension, the Spirit was sent to sanctify the church so that believers could have access to the Father through Christ.¹⁶⁷ In this manner, the Spirit played a vital role in the mission of Christ by giving the life of union with the Father in Christ and giving humans participation in this divine life with the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.

The Spirit and Sin

What are the implications of this pneumatology for the moral formation of humans? When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, he explained, "And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgement, because the ruler of this world is judged."¹⁶⁸ This convincing serves salvific purposes for "conversion requires convincing of sin."¹⁶⁹

According to John Paul, sin involves the opposition of the will of the human person to the will of God so it takes place first in the will and conscience. At the root of sin is a radical rejection of the truth through unbelief. Because God alone is the source for deciding good and evil, a rejection of the truth entails the human's claim to become an independent source for deciding about good and evil. The Spirit knows this

¹⁶⁵ *Spirit*, 251.

¹⁶⁶ *Spirit*, 253.

¹⁶⁷ *DV*, 25.

¹⁶⁸ *DV*, 27.

¹⁶⁹ *DV*, 31.

dimension of sin in human persons and at the same time, the Spirit "is for man the light of conscience and the source of the moral order."¹⁷⁰

John Paul explained that the "image and likeness" to God given to the human person not only entails rationality and freedom as constitutive properties of human nature. In addition, humans have the capacity of having a personal relationship with God, "the capacity of having a covenant which will take place in God's salvific communication with man."¹⁷¹ The "image" means a "call to friendship in which the transcendent depths of God become in some way opened to participation on the part of man."¹⁷² Human persons are called to participate in love and truth and in union with God who is eternal life. But through his disobedience, man separated himself from this participation, he turned from God and from true freedom. And through the influence of the "father of lies," there remains a constant pressure on humans to reject God.

The "convincing concerning sin" involves the revelation of the suffering that sin entails. Through his presence in the sacrifice of the Son of Man, the Holy Spirit enters human and cosmic suffering with a new outpouring of love that will redeem the world.¹⁷³ The Holy Spirit acts as love and gift through the sacrifice of Christ.

The "convincing concerning sin" also involves the conscience of the human. The conscience, placed in each person by the Creator, instructs the human person by commanding what is good and forbidding evil. John Paul locates the law of God, the objective norm, or the moral law in this "secret sanctuary" called conscience. He wrote, "The conscience is the 'voice of God' even when the human recognises in it nothing more than the principle of the moral order which it is not humanly possible to doubt."¹⁷⁴ The Holy Spirit strengthens the human person to obey her conscience and to wrestle to cling to what is good.¹⁷⁵

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit convinces the world of sin through the conscience. The conscience describes a capacity within each human person to hear

¹⁷⁰ *DV*, 36.

¹⁷¹ *DV*, 34.

¹⁷² *DV*, 34.

¹⁷³ *DV*, 39. "The Holy Spirit as Love and Gift comes down, in a certain sense, into the very heart of the sacrifice which is offered on the Cross. Referring here to the biblical tradition, we can say: He consumes this sacrifice with the fire of love that unites the Son with the Father in the Trinitarian communion. And since the sacrifice of the Cross is an act proper to Christ, also in this sacrifice he 'receives' the Holy Spirit." *DV*, 41.

¹⁷⁴ *DV*, 43.

¹⁷⁵ *DV*, 44.

God, to relate to God, to know the good and to respond in obedience. Thus, the Holy Spirit is involved in the moral formation of humans through the capacity John Paul calls conscience. We will come back to this vital capacity in John Paul's moral theology.

The Spirit and Life

While the Spirit convinces humans of sin, he also renews human life. The mystery of the Incarnation opened in a new way the source of divine life in the history of humankind: the Holy Spirit. The Word became flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁶ According to John Paul, "the filiation of divine adoption is born in man on the basis of the mystery of the Incarnation., therefore through Christ the eternal Son. But the birth, or rebirth, happens when God the Father 'sends the Spirit of the Son into our hearts.'"¹⁷⁷ The divine filiation is planted in the human soul by the Holy Spirit through sanctifying grace. This sanctifying grace is the principle and source of man's new, supernatural life. The Holy Spirit, the uncreated gift, is the source of this "supernatural adoption." This uncreated gift, residing in the human heart, initiates the created gift whereby humans become partakers of the divine nature.¹⁷⁸ As an adopted child, the Spirit remakes and recreates the human person in the likeness of Christ, giving humanity a dignity beyond compare.¹⁷⁹

By giving us this relationship with the Father and by strengthening us in the inner person, the Holy Spirit enables the human to find herself more fully by giving herself. In the following quote, John Paul explained what he calls the sum of Christian anthropology:

[Christian anthropology is] that theory and practice, based on the Gospel, in which man discovers himself as belonging to Christ and discovers that in Christ he is raised to the status of a child of God, and so understands better his own dignity as man, precisely because he is the subject of God's approach and presence, the subject of the divine condescension, which contains the prospect and the very root of definitive glorification. Thus it can truly be said that 'the glory of God is the living man, yet man's life is the vision of God': man, living a divine

¹⁷⁶ *DV*, 52.

¹⁷⁷ *DV*, 52; *Spirit*, 63-66.

¹⁷⁸ *DV*, 52.

¹⁷⁹ *Spirit*, 64.

life, is the glory of God, and the Holy Spirit is the hidden dispenser of this life and this glory.¹⁸⁰

This anthropology has implications for individuals and communities for when "people discover this divine dimension of their being and life," through the influence of the Holy Spirit, they are enabled, by grace, to free themselves from false understandings and domineering pressures of humanity and society. They discover the commandment of love, written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit.¹⁸¹ And they find freedom and self-fulfilment in relationship with the Triune God and by giving of themselves to God and to others.¹⁸²

Theological Basis: Conclusion

This theology of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit serves as the foundation for the moral teaching of John Paul. God reveals himself to humanity as the one who alone is good, who determines good and evil, and who becomes the model for moral action. He inscribed on the human heart the law, the duties and rights of humanity, to show love to himself and to other humans. His gracious acts of love toward humans illicit this moral response of love.¹⁸³

Jesus Christ interiorises the demands of the law and invites people to follow him, giving believers a share of his own life of obedience expressed in love. John Paul wrote, "Following Christ is thus the essential and primordial foundation of Christian morality."¹⁸⁴ Christ's way of acting and his teaching constitute the moral rule of the Christian life. This rule is summed up in the new commandment to love. Love indicates the sacrificial gift of self for another.¹⁸⁵ No human could ever fulfil the law of his own accord, however, and this is why is it necessary to receive "life in the Spirit" through Christ. John Paul wrote, "Only in this new life is it possible to carry out God's commandments."¹⁸⁶ He quoted Augustine to summarise his position, "The law was

¹⁸⁰ *DV*, 60.

¹⁸¹ *Spirit*, 73.

¹⁸² *DV*, 60; *Spirit*, 407-410.

¹⁸³ *VS*, 10.

¹⁸⁴ *VS*, 19. He also wrote, "Jesus Christ brings the question about morally good action back to its religious foundations, to the acknowledgement of God, who alone is goodness, fullness of life, the final end of human activity, and perfect happiness." *VS*, 9.

¹⁸⁵ *VS*, 20.

¹⁸⁶ *VS*, 23.

given that grace might be sought; and grace was given, that the law might be fulfilled.”¹⁸⁷ Thus, in the Son and through the Spirit, God calls the human into a life of participation with his own life and draws the human person into obedience through his loving gift of self.

Social Doctrine:

John Paul's Moral Theology

John Paul's encyclicals are broadly classified into two categories: theological encyclicals and social encyclicals. His social doctrine builds upon his theological assumptions that we have just delineated in section one of this chapter. This second section will examine John Paul's social doctrine in his moral theology and in his social encyclicals dealing with political and economic justice. In particular, we will look at the influence of John Paul's pervading theme regarding human dignity and the implications it has for morality in the social sphere.

Moral Theology and Natural Law

John Paul explained the obedience to which God calls freely the human. God cares for humans “from within,” through reason “which by its natural knowledge of God's eternal law, is consequently able to show man the right direction to take in his free actions.”¹⁸⁸ He expounded this idea of law:

In this way God calls man to participate in his own providence, since he desires to guide the world—not only the world of nature but also the world of human persons—through man himself, through man's reasonable and responsible care. The natural law enters here as the human expression of God's eternal law. Saint Thomas wrote, ‘Among all others, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in the most excellent way, insofar as it partakes of a share of providence, being provident both for itself and for others. Thus it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end. This participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called natural law.’¹⁸⁹

According to John Paul, natural law, accessible through reason, finds its foundation in the eternal law of God and its authority is universal, extending to all humans. In

¹⁸⁷ *VS*, 23.

¹⁸⁸ *VS*, 43.

¹⁸⁹ *VS*, 43. Quotation from *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 93, a. 1.

addition, natural law expresses the dignity of the person and it lays the foundation for human rights and duties.¹⁹⁰

Conscience and Moral Acts

The conscience plays a vital role in the moral judgement of humans because it applies this universal knowledge of the good; it confronts humans with the law. The conscience, John Paul stressed, does not decide good and evil.¹⁹¹ The relationship between the human's freedom and God's law is lived out in the conscience because the law is not imposed on the conscience but the law teaches and summons the human to love good and avoid evil. The conscience applies the law to particular cases.¹⁹² The freedom of the human, John Paul explains, "is not only the choice for one or another particular action; it is also, within that choice, a decision about oneself and a setting of one's own life for or against the Good, for or against the Truth, and ultimately for or against God."¹⁹³ The conscience draws the human to cleave to God in freedom. For this reason, the conscience determines the dignity of the human; it is "the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths."¹⁹⁴

According to John Paul, the relationship between human freedom and God's law, which has its centre in the moral conscience, is manifested and realised in human acts. For through his acts, "man attains perfection as man, as one who is called to seek his Creator of his own accord and freely to arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him."¹⁹⁵ Echoing *The Acting Person*, John Paul explained that human acts are moral acts because "they express and determine the goodness of the individual who

¹⁹⁰ *VS*, 51.

¹⁹¹ *VS*, 32 and 57.

¹⁹² *VS*, 59.

¹⁹³ *VS*, 65. John Paul writes elsewhere, that the question of freedom cannot be pressed from the issue of freedom, "for there can be no morality without freedom: 'It is only in freedom that man can turn to what is good.' . . . 'Genuine freedom is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image in man. For God willed to leave man 'in the power of his own counsel' (cf. Sir 15:14), so that he would seek his Creator of his own accord and would freely arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God.'" *VS*, 34; Quotations from *GS*, 17.

¹⁹⁴ *DV*, 43.

¹⁹⁵ *VS*, 71.

performs them.”¹⁹⁶ Humans create themselves through their decisions because deliberate choices give moral definition to the person who performs them.

Likewise, the formation of society finds its basis in moral norms. John Paul wrote, “These norms in fact represent the unshakeable foundation and solid guarantee of a just and peaceful human coexistence, and hence of genuine democracy, which can come into being and develop only on the basis of the equality of all its members, who possess common rights and duties.”¹⁹⁷ Moral norms serve to protect the dignity of every human being and they preserve the social fabric for its development. With this foundation established, we now turn to explore John Paul’s application of this moral theology for the political and economic spheres of society.

Social Doctrine:

The Dignity of Persons as the Criterion for Political and Economic Justice

The foundational theme throughout John Paul’s social encyclicals, writings, and speeches is the same theme which has dominated his writings from his pre-papal days until the present: the dignity of the human person. John Paul wrote:

Today the Church’s social doctrine focuses especially on man as he is involved in a complex network of relationships within modern societies. The human sciences and philosophy are helpful for interpreting man’s central place within society and for enabling him to understand himself better as a ‘social being.’ However, man’s true identity is only fully revealed through faith, and it is precisely from faith that the Church’s social teaching begins.¹⁹⁸

John Paul believes that the contribution of the church to the state and the economy is “her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, John Paul analysed and critiqued political and economic systems based upon these criteria of human value and freedom, which derive from his theological commitments.²⁰⁰ According to John Paul, the human person must be the highest value of society. The human does not exist for the sake of political or economic

¹⁹⁶ *VS*, 71.

¹⁹⁷ *VS*, 96.

¹⁹⁸ *CA*, 54.

¹⁹⁹ *CA*, 47.

²⁰⁰ *CA*, 55 and *SRS*, 41. John Paul wrote, “Christian anthropology is really a chapter of theology, and for this reason, the Church’s social doctrine, by its concern for man and by its interest in him and in the way he conducts himself in the world, ‘belongs to the field . . . of theology and particularly of moral theology.’”

advancement. Rather, society exists for the sake of the humans who make up that society; it serves the human person by upholding human rights and advancing human responsibilities.

John Paul emphasises this theme of the primacy of the human person in the social sphere using his conception of solidarity. He asserts that true solidarity recognises and upholds the personhood of the other.²⁰¹ John Paul explains, "Solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbour is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit."²⁰² John Paul locates the potential for such a bond of unity between persons in the model of the triune life of God.²⁰³

The Human Person in the Political Sphere

Humans work toward this solidarity in the context of the state. According to John Paul, the state must facilitate the life of the people and "ensure the normal development of man's spiritual and temporal activities."²⁰⁴ The purpose of the state is this service to the common good by upholding the rule of law.²⁰⁵

Pope John Paul opposed the totalitarian state because of its opposition to the rule of law in favour of rule by the power and violence of a few individuals. He argued that totalitarianism arises from a denial of objective truth. Without objective truth, no foundation exists for guaranteeing just relations between people. "If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or

²⁰¹ *SRS*, 39. Cf. Gregg, 205-12.

²⁰² *SRS*, 40.

²⁰³ Notice that John Paul's emphasis is upon the potential for unity when he writes, "that 'there is discerned in the light of faith a new model of unity of the human race, which must ultimately inspire our solidarity. This supreme model of unity, which is a reflection of the intimate life of God, one God in three Persons, is what we Christians mean by the word 'communion.'" *SRS*, 40. This conception of solidarity as potentiality will be raised again in the final comparative chapter.

²⁰⁴ *CA*, 44. John Paul, *The Person, the Nation, and the State*, from series, *The Social Teaching of John Paul*, volume 6, William Murphy, ed., (Vatican City: Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, 1980), 25.

²⁰⁵ John Paul, "Protection of Human Rights is Indispensable" in *L'Osservatore Romano* N. 40 (4 October 2000), 6.

his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others.”²⁰⁶ John Paul located the root of modern totalitarianism in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who is made in the image of God and is the subject of rights that no one may violate. Thus, the atheism of modern totalitarianism led to a denial of the transcendence of the human person, the reality of moral law to which all persons are subject. Eventually this denial led to an incurable systemic injustice which brought its eventual demise.

John Paul favours what he called “authentic democracy,” which is a democratic system that ensures the participation and freedom of citizens while submitting itself to the true and objective law of God.²⁰⁷ He echoed Pope Leo XIII in his support for three powers of society: legislative, executive, and judicial. By this balancing of power, the rule of law is upheld and the freedom of all is protected. He critiques the present agnosticism and relativism that adheres to truth and is determined by the majority. He writes, “If there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.”²⁰⁸ Thus, the Christian must witness to truth as the foundation for freedom and justice in society.

At both the national and international level, John Paul calls for governmental structures to be in place that will uphold the human rights which are intrinsic to the dignity of the human.²⁰⁹ In an address to the Presidents of European Union Parliaments, John Paul said, “Society acknowledges that it is at the service of its members and their natural aspiration to find fulfilment as individuals and social beings. This aspiration, part of the nature of the person, corresponds to inherent rights of the person, such as the right to live, to physical and mental integrity, to freedom of conscience, thought, and religion.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ CA, 44.

²⁰⁷ CA, 46 and John Paul, “Democracy must be Based on Moral Norms,” *L'Osservatore Romano* N. 10 (8 March 2000):8.

²⁰⁸ CA, 46.

²⁰⁹ CA, 48 and SRS, 33. Among these rights he includes the right to life, the right to live in a united family conducive to growth, the right to develop one's intelligence and freedom in seeking the truth, the right to work, the right to religious freedom, the right to share in economic development, and the right to own property.

²¹⁰ “Protection of Human Rights is Indispensable,” 6.

The Human Person in the Economic Sphere

The responsibility of the church in the economic sphere, according to John Paul, is not to propose particular economic systems but to lay down principles and criteria that can guide human action toward the authentic progress of society by safeguarding the dignity and rights of all persons.²¹¹ Thus, while he has explored the justice of economic systems, evaluating them based upon their value for the moral development of the human person, the most vital topic for John Paul has been the issue of work.²¹²

Just Work

Why did John Paul place work at the centre of the social question?²¹³ He did so because his theological and philosophical anthropology. Echoing his earlier arguments in *The Acting Person*, John Paul contended that work or labour plays both an objective and a subjective role in society. He understands work as a "transitive" activity: "an activity beginning in the human subject and directed towards an external object."²¹⁴ Work in the objective sense expresses the dominion or kingship of humanity over the earth.

Yet the activity of work also contains a subjective sense because the human is the subject of work. John Paul explained,

Man has to subdue the earth and dominate it, because as the "image of God" he is person, that is to say, a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself, and with a tendency to self-realisation. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work. As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must serve to realise his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity.²¹⁵

Through work, the human person not only exercises dominion over nature but he also fulfils the kingship of Christ in relation to himself. Echoing his philosophical treatises, John Paul confirmed that centrality of work to the social question rests in the formative nature of work upon the human person and upon society. He affirmed the words of *Gaudium et Spes*:

²¹¹ Dulles, 131.

²¹² He wrote, "Human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question." *LE*, 3.2.

²¹³ *LE*, 2.1.

²¹⁴ *LE*, 4.3.

²¹⁵ *LE*, 6.2. Cf. *GS*, Ch. 1.

Just as human activity proceeds from man, so it is ordered toward man. For when man works he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he cultivates his resources, he goes outside of himself and beyond himself. Rightly understood, this kind of growth is of greater value than any external riches which can be garnered. . . . Hence, the norm of human activity is this: that in accord with the divine plan and will, it should harmonise with the genuine good of the human race, and allow people as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfil it.²¹⁶

Justice in Economic Systems

John Paul employed this norm in his evaluation of economic systems. He critiqued both Socialism and Capitalism on this basis. He argued that Socialism considers the human person as an element, a molecule within a social organism. The system subordinates the human person to the functioning of the socio-economic mechanism, reduces the human to a series of social relationships, and removes the concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decisions.²¹⁷ While advocates of the free market defend their system for achieving greater satisfaction of material human needs, they encounter a similar danger of reducing the human to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs.²¹⁸

Economics must recognise, safeguard, and promote the primacy of the person, John Paul argued.²¹⁹ He warned that the present movement toward a consumer-based society carries great dangers because it ensnares people in a "web of false and superficial gratifications rather than being helped to experience their personhood in an authentic and concrete way."²²⁰ The person concerned solely with possessing or enjoying cannot be free but becomes subject to the consumerist drive of society.²²¹ He does not recognise the transcendent value of the human person, the grandeur given by God and redeemed by Christ. Rather, by viewing others merely as a means to productive and profitable ends, he cuts himself off from a relationship of solidarity and communion with others. "Indeed," John Paul wrote, "it is through the free gift of self

²¹⁶ *LE*, 26.5. From *GS*, 35. Cf. *SRS*, 30.

²¹⁷ *CA*, 13.

²¹⁸ *CA*, 19.

²¹⁹ John Paul II, "Economy Must Respect Primacy of the Person," *L'Osservatore Romano* N. 3 (19 January 2000), 9.

²²⁰ *CA*, 41.

²²¹ Wealthy civilisations find themselves enslaved to an abuse of freedom, "an abuse linked precisely with a consumer attitude uncontrolled by ethics" in which material goods are given greater value than humanity and the accumulation of goods causes great social ills. *RH*, 16.

that man truly finds himself. This gift is made possible by the human person's essential 'capacity for transcendence.'"²²²

However, John Paul did not condemn capitalism in total. He recognised the need for business to earn a profit and the value of the free market for allowing humans to participate in the economy. He affirmed the implementation of the capitalist system in the attempt to rebuild developing economies "If by 'capitalism' is meant an economic system which recognises the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector."²²³ He affirms the positive value of the market and of enterprise as long as it is oriented toward the common good.²²⁴

Economic Development

With regard to poverty and economic development, John Paul argued that the principle obstacle to development is human sin. In the same way that formation has a moral character, the causes of undevelopment are ultimately moral.²²⁵ Humans create and participate in structures of sin that enable injustice through selfishness, abuse of power, and moral evil. Over against these harmful structures, God's will provides the foundation for the ethic of love and the value for human life. Christ supplies the model for charity and self-giving. Thus, John Paul calls for the exercise of solidarity in society by recognising one another as persons. The strong should feel responsible to care for the weaker and share what they possess. Those who are weaker must also give what they can for the good of all. This solidarity, this life-giving going beyond oneself, is not only the path to development, but it also the path to justice and peace between peoples and nations.²²⁶

²²² CA, 41.

²²³ CA, 42.

²²⁴ CA, 43.

²²⁵ SRS, 35. John Paul wrote, "Development which is merely economic is incapable of setting man free, on the contrary, it will end by enslaving him further. Development that does not include the cultural, transcendent and religious dimensions of man and society, to the extent that it does not recognise the existence of such dimensions and does not endeavour to direct its goals and priorities toward the same, is even less conducive to authentic liberation. Human beings are totally free only when they are completely themselves, in the fullness of their rights and duties. The same can be said about society as a whole." SRS, 46.

²²⁶ SRS, 39.

Conclusion to Chapter Three

In this chapter, we have investigated the theological foundations for social justice in the writings of John Paul II. We have explored the key role of anthropology for the social doctrine of John Paul, with special focus on the dignity of humanity, both in its theological dimensions as well as in its ethical implications. The creation of humanity in the image of God established the dignity of all humans. However, this dignity was marred by sin and needed the restoring work of Jesus Christ. The coming of the Son of God as man raised humanity to a dignity beyond compare. His life taught humans how to live morally and by his death and resurrection he raised humans to a life of participation with God. The Spirit facilitates this ongoing relationship between humans and God by enabling people to live and to give of themselves to others in the model of Jesus Christ. At the same time, God establishes his Kingdom on earth as humans in the church participate in his rule.

In the thought of John Paul, the dignity of humanity founded upon this revelation of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit became the criterion by which economic and political systems could be judged and the criterion by which they must be formed. Though there will be no 'perfect' system of government or economics, Christians must work to promote those that support the rights of humans and promote the moral upbuilding of society. In this manner, John Paul relates just social ethics to a Christian understanding of personhood. For in God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Christians discover the true meaning of humanity and the depth of human dignity. In addition, they discover a deeper sense of their personal dignity by living in accordance with the law founded in God. Christians finally promote a just society by living in participation with the reign of God being established on this earth, proclaiming his truth, living by his laws, and giving of themselves for their fellow humans.

Conclusion to Part One:

The Anthropological Social Ethics of John Paul II

While John Paul could easily agree with the various "secular" documents defending the dignity and the rights of humanity, we have argued in these three chapters that his *basis* for such agreement is uniquely theological. In other words, the whole basis for John Paul's social doctrine is his theological anthropology. Although philosophical inquiry can start one down the correct path, John Paul believes, one

cannot arrive at a full understanding of the human person in society apart from the Christian doctrine of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Fully comprehending human persons means recognising the intrinsic dignity of humanity, received in the *imago Dei*, raised to new meaning by Jesus Christ, and renewed in the Holy Spirit. From Wojtyla's early childhood experience with the pain of death, the horror of war, and the demoralisation of oppression, Wojtyla witnessed the resilience of specific persons who were able to rise above such destruction. The faith of his father, the spirituality of Tyranowski, and the love of the priests and bishops who became his new family fostered Wojtyla's hope in humanity. His Thomistic training offered new insight into human dignity, revealed in the human capacity for transcendence both with regard to truth and with regard to the "germ of eternity"²²⁷ in each human person which longs for communion with God. Thomism gave Wojtyla the weapons to fight against the materialist and naturalist ideology that prevailed in Poland by reminding his flocks of this transcendent reality. His work in phenomenology gave him the tools to explore the human person more deeply and to argue that the existence of the consciousness and the formation of human consciousness through good acts entails a higher good, the common good toward which humans in society must strive. Finally, his mature theological work as John Paul II affirmed his belief in the surpassing value of human persons and confirmed the critical criterion by which political and economic systems must be judged: the criterion of human dignity.

Within these three chapters, we have examined some of the key assumptions that underlie John Paul's optimistic humanism. First, the doctrine of the *analogia entis* lies behind his epistemology, his doctrine of God and of sin, his moral theology, and his hope for justice in society. Because humans share in the being of God, they have dignity and they possess (to some degree) a 'human goodness' that gives them access to natural law and an authentic freedom to choose good or evil. This key assumption means that neither epistemic access to truth nor the capacity to behave justly were rendered useless by human sin. Rather, by means of natural law all humans can know some degree of moral truth and can behave in accordance with this truth. Thus, John Paul takes a very optimistic stance regarding the possibilities for human justice through work with the UN and dialogue with those who stand outside of the Christian faith.

²²⁷ A phrase taken from de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 202.

Secondly, John Paul assumes that Christ's justification before God, "is the main foundation of all justice."²²⁸ By giving of himself, Christ overcame justice with mercy; he revealed the love of God for humanity in a radical new way. This overwhelming love and mercy of God in Christ initiated a relationship of love through which the human enters a new relation with the Father. In Christ, the dignity that was lost by sin is re-established and human persons have been adopted to live in a redeemed relation of participation with God. According to John Paul, the life and death of Jesus are a powerful new model for Christians in their relation to society. Christians live in this new morality of love through the help of the Holy Spirit and with the highest goal consisting in the act that corresponds with solidarity, the gift of self on behalf of the other.²²⁹

The third key assumption regards God's providential establishment of his Kingdom, into which humans have also been brought to participate. By participating in the dominion of the creator, humans experience their own autonomy and responsibility before God. In Christ, humans have been become sharers in the mission of God to establish his Kingdom by proclaiming divine truth which entails affirming the dignity of humanity, declaring the justice of God, and asserting the moral law in society. The kingly mission calls Christians to practice solidarity by giving of themselves in service to others through dominion over the self and through unreserved giving of one's whole person to Christ and to humankind.

These key assumptions of John Paul II, will serve as a starting point for dialogue with Protestant theologian, Karl Barth. Before engaging in this dialogue, however, we must now turn to examine the theological foundations for social justice in the writings of Karl Barth. Like John Paul II, and perhaps more vehemently, Karl Barth argued that human justice must derive from a theological interpretation of human personhood. We will now investigate Barth's anthropology both in its early development and in its mature form, as it engages and informs his social ethic.

²²⁸ *SC*, 84.

²²⁹ *SRS*, 39.

PART TWO:

KARL BARTH'S CHRISTOLOGICAL SOCIAL ETHICS

CHAPTER FOUR

KARL BARTH AND THE HUMILITY OF HUMANITY

The introduction to this work suggested that the weakness of the UN Declaration on human rights lies in an incomplete understanding of the complexity of the human persons in society. I proposed that the "inherent dignity" of the human person may be more fully grasped through a Christian understanding of humanity. For this reason, while social programs may benefit society, they may fall short of establishing the justice and peace for which the UN or other social agencies aim.

Part One presented the theological anthropology of John Paul II in support of this claim. As a representative of the Catholic strand of Christian thought, John Paul argues that the fullness of human persons can only be grasped in Christ. The creation, redemption, and sanctification of humankind in Christ have vital implications for social programs. In Part Two of this work, we turn to examine a representative of Protestant theology, Karl Barth. Like John Paul, Barth also seeks the basis for social ethics in his theology. However, emerging from a radically different historical and theological context, Barth's ethics developed along different lines and his anthropology addressed different concerns.

Whereas Wojtyla was born in difficult times and faced tragedy at a young age, the Switzerland of Barth's early years was hopeful and relatively prosperous. Wojtyla grew up following the affliction of WWI and he experienced with his nation the oppression of the Germans and the communists. In contrast, when war did come, Barth lived in the land of the aggressor. One may think that John Paul's suffering with his oppressed Poland would have led him to a much more pessimistic view of humanity and the possibilities for social justice. Yet it was Barth who pronounced the "Nein!" and condemned humanity to the judgement of God. Barth rejected the optimistic view

of personhood that dominated his context. He encountered humanity at its most optimistic and he observed the destruction wrought by such hubris. His disillusionment compelled him to seek a point of correction, a critical criterion for the hubris that expressed itself in the glorification of humanity.

First, Barth spoke the "Nein" of God's judgement.¹ He emphasised the sovereignty and the Word of God as separated from and over against human creatureliness. Then Barth found in Christ the point of contact, the God-man who becomes the critical judge of humanity yet who also becomes the Yes of God toward humanity, the affirmation of God's covenant, and the source of God's redemption. In humanity, Barth would argue, there does not exist a seed of goodness by which humans may freely choose to live ethically. Christ reveals the judgement of God against autonomous human action. Christ exposes the problems of human pride, sloth, and untruthfulness that destroy humanity and personal freedom. Yet the God-man Christ also reconciles human persons by his justification and sanctification. With the Holy Spirit, he redeems persons and enables them to overcome the effects of sin. Thus, this Christological dialectic of judgement and hope provides a key for Barth's anthropology, out of which his social ethic emerges.

This chapter will focus on the judgement side of Barth's dialectic for humanity, tracing why it emerged in an historical context that deified humanity and how Christology became a critical criterion for assessing social ethics. Through his grace toward humanity and his judgement against sinful humanity, Christ served as the critical criterion for determining "real humanity" and human justice in the political and economic spheres. Chapter Five will trace the theme of personhood in Barth's doctrines of God and Creation, examining the key concepts that underlie his social ethics. In Chapter Six, we will examine the significance of Christ's reconciliation for establishing social justice. In this manner, Part Two will demonstrate Barth's own critique of attempts to ground ethics in an understanding of personhood which is independent of theology and we will examine the central beliefs which shape his Christological social ethics.

¹ Barth later recalled the No of his early years, "It was due to the inner and outer circumstances of these years that the divine No of judgement, now understood as a No directed both to the present position and to all possible and attempted religious and cultural development, had to be expressed more loudly, and certainly more clearly heard than the gracious Yes that we believed we genuinely heard, and genuinely wished to express, from the end, the real end, of all things." *CD* II.1.634.

The Deification of the Human Person in Theological Liberalism and Religious Socialism

While working as a pastor in Safenwil from 1911 to 1921, Barth began thinking more seriously about the connection between theology and social ethics.² His special interest in the members of his church opened his eyes to the political and economic injustice of his day. He recalled, "In the class conflict which I saw concretely before me in my congregation, I was touched for the first time by the real problems of real life."³ The struggles of the working members of his congregation caused Barth to ask questions regarding the social implications of his Christian faith, questions for which the liberal theology of his day could not provide answers.

Barth began to question the political conservatism supported by the theology of his esteemed professors such as Herrmann and von Harnack. While Wilhelm Herrmann expressed concern for the working classes, his analysis of social problems focused upon individual relations with no interest in structural or institutional forms of evil.⁴

² Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt's controversial thesis that Barth's socialism was the primary influence upon the shape of his theology brought attention to the interrelation of Barth's social concerns and his theology. [See *Theologie and Socialismus: Das Beispiel Karl Barths*, (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1972) and "Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth" in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, George Hunsinger, ed., (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 47-76.] However, subsequent critiques of Marquardt's work have exposed the fallacies of his driving thesis. Eberhard Jüngel argued that Marquardt's socialist interpretation is "imaginative," "undisciplined," and "preposterous" because it does not take the text of Barth's writing seriously. He wrote, "Surely there is something like an 'institutionally reflective form' to theological concepts—but this should not, above all in light of the theology of Karl Barth, even be an issue." [*Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, trans. Garrett Paul, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 14.] Jüngel argued in this book that Barth achieved this theology of freedom through his methodology that was radically independent of any authority or ideology other than Christ. He demonstrated that Barth's theology was a "theology of freedom, speaking of the sovereign freedom of a gracious God and of the justified freedom of the human being who receives grace" (20). [See also the comparative study of Jüngel and Marquardt by Alexander McKelway, "Karl Barth and Politics," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 15, no 1 (Spring 1988), 269-281.] A second critique by Marcus Barth, while affirming Marquardt's insight into the importance of his father's concern for social and economic righteousness, rejected "Marquardt's simplification of these most complex issues" on account of his "primitive, undialectical thinking." [Marcus Barth, "Current Discussion on the Political Character of Karl Barth's Theology," in *Footnotes to a Theology*, Martin Rumscheidt, ed., (Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1974), 82-85. See also Bruce McCormack's critique in *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 184-203.] This work will take the side of Marquardt's critics by acknowledging Barth's social concerns and recognising that his socialism forced him to rethink his theological premises. Yet as Jüngel argued, Barth's mature theology was dependent upon the authority of God's revelation in Christ and his social ethics arose from within this basis. See for instance, Barth's shift in his view of the state from *Romans* to his later *CD*. In addition, the structure of Barth's *Dogmatics* and his introduction to his special ethics in *CD* III.4 displays Barth's own concern to seek first a theological foundation which is not determined by prevailing ideology, before considering the ethical consequences.

³ Karl Barth, *Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann: Letters 1922-1966*, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 154.

⁴ Adolf von Harnack and Wilhelm Herrman, *Essays in the Social Gospel*, G.M. Craik, ed., Maurice Canney, trans., (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907):145-225.

Adolf von Harnack taught that the Kingdom existed as something inward rather than outward, consisting in the union of the individual soul with God.⁵ Harnack wrote, "True, the Kingdom of God is the rule of God; but it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals . . . It is not a question of angels and devils, thrones and principalities, but of God and the soul, the soul and its God."⁶ Barth's pastoral work caused him to question Harnack's teaching that the gospel of Jesus was concerned with the souls of individual humans and had nothing to say to the political or economical organisation of society or to the struggle for social justice.

Though Barth accepted this conservatism for a time,⁷ the confrontation with conditions of the working class jarred his sensibilities. During the first summer of his pastorate he carefully studied Werner Sombart's *Sozialismus und Soziale Bewegung*. This work acquainted Barth with socialism and convinced him of the connection between the gospel and socialist demands.⁸

The Religious Socialist Critique of Bourgeois Liberalism

When Eduard Thurneysen introduced Barth to Hermann Kutter, Barth was stimulated by dialogue with others who were thinking along similar lines.⁹ Barth later recalled that his encounter with the Religious Socialism of Kutter and his disciple, Leonhard Ragaz, illuminated the drastic reduction of the gospel by liberal theologians.

⁵ McCormack, 90.

⁶ Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 56.

⁷ When he was in training as an assistant pastor in Geneva, Barth regarded "social misery as a necessary fact of nature in the midst of which faith held forth a strong but impractical hope." Barth, "Evangelium und Sozialismus" (original manuscript in Karl Barth-Archiv, Basle). The citations taken from Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt, *Verwegenheiten: Theologische Stücke aus Berlin* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1981), 473, quoted and translated in McCormack, 80.

⁸ Barth wrote, "It was through S. that I became acquainted with socialism and was driven to more exacting reflection and study of the matter. Since that time, I have held socialist demands to be an important part of the application of the gospel, though I also believe that they cannot be realised without the gospel." McCormack agrees with Marquardt's assumption that S. is Sombart but argues that Barth did not read Sombart in 1906 as Marquardt claims. Barth's copy of Sombart was not printed until 1908 and Barth himself recalled reading Sombart after his arrival in Safenwil. See McCormack, 80, n. 7. Though McCormack is probably correct regarding the connections Barth made between his own liberal theology and socialism at this time, Barth had previously observed socialism as it related to Christian faith through his earlier exposure to socialism in his father's work and the political climate of Switzerland during his childhood. Thus, perhaps he did recognise some tension between his own institutional ethical concerns with the conservative and individualist ethics of his professors during his university years.

⁹ Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. John Bowden, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 73-75.

Kutter argued that the churches had falsified the message of Christ by turning the gospel into a harmless, inward spirituality. Both Kutter and Ragaz called churches to repent, to renounce "the dead God of the bourgeois classes," and to renew their faith in the living God of the Bible. Socialism, Kutter proclaimed, was nothing less than the "hammer of God" calling churches to repentance.¹⁰ Ragaz took this idea a step farther by regarding socialism as a preliminary manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

While Barth could not embrace Religious Socialism so readily, he enthusiastically committed himself to the socialist ideals and later credited Kutter and Ragaz for opening his eyes to "the fact that God might actually be wholly other than the God confined to the musty shell of the Christian-religious self-consciousness, and that as such he might act and speak."¹¹ Barth's involvement in the trade union movement in Safenwil eventually earned him the nickname, "The Red Pastor."¹²

WWI and Barth's Disillusionment with the Prevailing Anthropology

The 1914 war policy of the Kaiser became the decisive factor in Barth's total break with liberal theology, his disillusionment with the promise of socialism, and his search for the God who is not merely a product of the human attempt to deify himself or to justify his own actions. In July of that year, the international crisis involving the great European powers rapidly intensified, including the Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans, Franco-German mutual resentment and distrust, and the Anglo-German rivalry. As the crisis escalated and German involvement and aggression indicated the certainty of war, the Social Democrats and the liberals united behind the Kaiser in support. By the time that war began, the Kaiser received almost unified support from society and intellectuals alike. A group of ninety-three of the most distinguished German intellectuals, some of the greatest figures in world literature, music, painting, philosophy, science, and theology issued a manifesto in support of the war, proclaiming that "the German army and the German people are one."¹³

¹⁰ McCormack, 84.

¹¹ Barth, *The Humanity of God*, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), 40.

¹² Busch, 83. In the Gifford Lectures at the University of St. Andrews, 2001, Stanley Hauerwas told the story of his visit to Safenwil. While visiting, Hauerwas inquired of the townspeople, "Do you remember Karl Barth?" "Ah, yes," they replied, "the Red Pastor."

¹³ Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany*, (London: Collier-MacMillan Limited, 1966), 316.

In a letter to Brunner, Barth recalled the eye-opening challenge to his theological beliefs and his socialist activity of this time:

A change came only with the outbreak of World War I. This brought concretely to light two aberrations: first in the teaching of my theological mentors in German, who seemed to me to be hopelessly compromised by their submission to the ideology of the war; and second in socialism. I had credulously enough expected socialism, more than I had the Christian church, to avoid the ideology of the war, but to my horror I saw it doing the very opposite in every land.¹⁴

On the theological front, Barth was shocked by the issuing of the manifesto that supported the war policy of the Kaiser. Included on that list were many of Barth's former professors including Harnack and Hermann. Barth reflected that "a whole world of exegesis, ethics, dogmatics, and preaching, which I had hitherto held to be essentially trustworthy, was shaken to the foundations, and with it, all the other writings of the German theologians."¹⁵ For Barth, the outbreak of the war was "a double madness," for "we had more or less definitely expected that socialism would prove to be a kind of hammer of God, yet all along national war fronts we saw it swinging into line."¹⁶

Disillusioned by the violence of German culture as supported by socialism and angered by the inability of Christian theologians to speak a word of correction, Barth began to realise that in German culture and in Christian theology, the human had become the measure of all things. He explained:

When the Christian gospel was changed into a statement, a religion, about Christian self-awareness, the God was lost sight of who in His sovereignty confronts man, calling him to account, and dealing with him as Lord. This loss also blurred the sight horizontally. The Christian was condemned to uncritical and irresponsible subservience to the patterns, forces, and movements of human history and civilisation.¹⁷

In other words, Christian theologians had reduced the transcendent God to human consciousness, had allowed human history and human culture to provide the social guidelines in the place of God, and had exposed their inability to correct the glorification of humanity which created conditions of unimaginable inhumanity. Barth

¹⁴ Barth, *Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann: Letters 1922-1966*, 154.

¹⁵ Busch, 81 from "Nachwort," 293.

¹⁶ CD III, 4.450. Ironically, after years of reservation, Barth joined the Social Democratic Party at this time to demonstrate that faith entails involvement in the world and with the hope of reforming the party from within (Busch, 82).

¹⁷ *The Humanity of God*, 27.

sought the God who is wholly other, the God who is transcendent, and who provides the critical criterion for social justice.¹⁸

The Blumhardt's Ministry: The God Who is Wholly Other

A turning point for Barth came in April 1915 when Thurneysen introduced Barth to Christopher Blumhardt. Barth was attracted to Blumhardt upon first meeting, describing him as "a man who was not so sure of his affairs, because his secret awareness was beyond anything he could express. At any rate, this uncertainty was the best thing about him."¹⁹ In contrast with the cultural deification of human opinion, Barth recognised in Blumhardt a humility and a faith in something beyond himself. Having lost confidence in humanity and beginning to turn his criticism inward, Barth was drawn to Blumhardt's starting point for social ethics: God. Barth wrote, "Blumhardt always begins right away with God's presence, might, and purpose: he starts out from God; he does not begin by climbing upwards to Him by means of contemplation and deliberation. God is the end, and because we already know Him as the beginning, we may await His consummating acts."²⁰

From this starting point, the Blumhardts stood beyond the dogmatic and the liberal as well as the socialist theologians. "He refutes nobody, and nobody needs to feel refuted by him, but he does not concur with anybody else's views either."²¹ Barth described Blumhardt's critique as priestly because he both engaged with the world yet did not bend to the ideals of culture. Barth wrote:

I see only that Blumhardt can do something which we others mostly cannot do: represent God's cause in the world yet not wage war on the world, love the world and yet be completely faithful to God, suffer with the world and speak a frank word about its need and at the same time go beyond this to speak the redeeming word about the help it waits for, carry the world up to God and bring God into the world, and be an advocate for men before God and a messenger of God bringing peace to men, pleading unceasingly and unwaveringly before God and to God,

¹⁸ John Webster characterised Barth's concern during this period similarly, "Barth was struggling to wrest ethics from the hands of those who had made it into what he judged to be merely the theoretical counterpart of an idolatrous pattern of cultural-religious action which required no serious talk of God as other than immanent to the teleology of human self-realisation." *Barth's Moral Theology*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 19.

¹⁹ Busch, 84.

²⁰ *Action in Waiting*, (Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House, 1969), 23-4.

²¹ *Action in Waiting*, 20.

"Thy Kingdom come!" and waiting and hastening with men toward its coming.²²

Blumhardt's starting point in the power of God, the victory of Christ over evil, the presence of the Spirit in this age, and the hope of the *eschaton* demonstrated for Barth a foundation for theology and ethics which no longer lay in human knowledge or human justice but in the God who is wholly other.²³

Barth's encounter with the writings of J. Blumhardt caused him to abandon support for Ragaz' program, believing that he and Ragaz had been approaching their political activity from the wrong starting point. McCormack describes this shift in Barth's thinking:

Up to this point in time, Barth had still operated on Herrmannian assumptions. He had identified the voice of God with the negative experiences of history and he had done so with a good deal of self-confidence because, consciously or unconsciously, he still acted as though he believed his own religious experience stood beyond all doubt. Given the certainty of religious experience, Barth felt that he had the right key in his hand for reading the ways of God off the face of history. He could not really be free of the axiom of religious experience until criticism turned inward; until he realised the questionability of all things human when seen in light of the otherness of God and His Kingdom had to apply to him and his friends as well as to their opponents. From now on, knowledge of God—the *a priori* of all true representation of the Kingdom—would be *the* central question in Karl Barth's new theology.²⁴

Seeking a Critical Criterion for Justice:

The Justice of God

Barth's disillusionment with his former guides led him to seek an entirely new foundation for theology. He rejected his prior approach in which "everything had always already been settled without God. God was always thought to be good enough to put the crowning touch to what men began of their own accord."²⁵ Barth recalls, "It was Thurneysen who whispered the key phrase to me, half aloud, while we were alone together: 'What we need for preaching, instruction, and pastoral care is a 'wholly other'

²² *Action in Waiting*, 22.

²³ Karl Barth, "Past and Future" in *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, ed. J. Smart, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968), 41-42.

²⁴ McCormack, 125. Ingrid Spieckermann argues the thesis that knowledge of God became the driving question of Barth's theology in *Gotteserkenntnis: Ein Beitrag zur Grundfrage der neuen Theologie Karl Barths* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1985).

²⁵ Busch, 100.

theological foundation.”²⁶ The two pastors began by reading and interpreting the Old and New Testaments more thoughtfully. These studies birthed Barth’s first commentary on *Romans* and his discovery of “the strange new world within the Bible.”²⁷

First Commentary on *Romans*: The Justice of God and the Sin of Humanity

In his commentary on *Romans*, Barth emphasised the radical otherness of God and the sin of humanity. With Adam’s sin and fall, all of humanity fell from the immediacy of being with God. The distance between God and the creature is the fall of the creature from God.²⁸ In order to establish a contact point between God and humanity, Barth developed an eschatology of process in which the new world has dawned in Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God is establishing itself by renewing this world through an “organic” sort of growth. Michael Beinkter summarised Barth’s new perspective in *Romans*, “the book is stamped by a process eschatology which clearly maintains no direct continuity between the Kingdom of God and the world but knows of a history of God which breaks through secretly out of the history of the death of this world.”²⁹ The Kingdom of God comes through a series of “breakthroughs” into this world whose continuity are guaranteed by their rootedness in the history of God. Barth chose the word “organic” to describe the continuity and growth of the Kingdom because it emphasised the work of God rather than the human person’s attempt to build the Kingdom.³⁰ In this sense of the phrase, Barth directly critiqued the teaching of Harnack and his former professors who maintained that the Kingdom of God arises through the ethical action of individuals. In opposition to this idea that God’s Kingdom is established through autonomous human activity, Barth believed that the Kingdom of God would establish itself through God’s work and bring change to individuals and to society.

This process eschatology finds significance for political activism in Barth’s exegesis of the thirteenth chapter of *Romans* in which he produced an obvious critique of Religious Socialism. For the purposes of this study, greater attention will be given to

²⁶ Busch, 97 from “Nachwort,” 294.

²⁷ Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1928), 28-50.

²⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 65-66.

²⁹ Michael Beinkter, “Der Romerbrief von 1919,” in Gerhard Sauter, ed, *Verkündigung und Forschung: Beihefte zu 'Evangelische Theologie' 2* (1985), 24; quoted in Bruce McCormack, 155.

³⁰ McCormack, 153-154.

Barth's exegesis in the second edition of *Romans* in which Barth refines his approach and understanding of the Kingdom of God. Of importance for this discussion is the understanding that all political action necessarily involves the human in sin and cannot be identified with the cause of God. Religious Socialism presumed the relation of continuity between divine and human action, maintaining an idealism that the human could judge and act for God. As McCormack points out, the one-sidedness of Barth's distinction between the Kingdom of God and the earth during this phase of Barth's theological development provides a weak basis for ethical decision and human involvement.³¹ Barth emphasised the transcendence of God's work in his desire to critique the human attempts to build the Kingdom of God through their own programs. Yet while the force of God's judgement against human attempts toward justice undermined his former foundations for justice, he had little positive to offer regarding human involvement in issues of social justice.

The Tambach Lectures: *Christ in Human Society*

Barth delivered a shocking critique of human attempts to establish justice in his lecture at Tambach in September 1919. Originally, Ragaz had been the keynote speaker at this Conference on Religion and Social Relations sponsored by the Christian Socialists. When Ragaz cancelled at the last moment, Barth was invited by those who thought that he was a disciple of Ragaz. However, Barth's message, "The Christian's Place in Society," caused a great stir because it was perceived to undercut the very activities and ideals of Christian Socialism.³² At the time that Barth gave the lecture, the impact of the war had been felt and many were looking for a new hope in the state for rebuilding German life and economy. Barth offered an unexpected hope: rather than promoting a new vision for the Christian Socialists as he was expected to do, Barth offered hope in the Kingdom of God. Once again, Barth emphasised the transcendence of God and he critiqued human approaches to society by distinguishing human work in society from the work of God.

On the positive side, Barth reminded his audience that the notion of Christian is the reality of *Christ in us*. The faith that Christ is in us affirms that society is not

³¹ McCormack, 178-179. John Webster takes a more sympathetic view of Barth, arguing that his reluctance to address the human moral life was not due to his disinterest in the subject but "to his deep sense that the prevailing ways of talking about what human beings constituted a suppression of the critical character of the question of ethics." Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 19.

³² Timothy Gorringer, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 48.

forsaken of God. Yet one cannot simply apply Christianity to society because the divine is wholly complete, a new and different something which stands in contrast to the world. The divine, Barth explained, "does not permit of being applied, stuck on, and fitted in. . . . It does not passively permit itself to be used: it overthrows and builds up as it wills. It is complete or it is nothing."³³ He warned that one must consider carefully before attempting to take Christ to society.

Having cautioned the Christian, Barth's discussion of society provoked his audience with the very questions they were asking: "Where is God in all the human? Where is meaning in the meaninglessness?" He affirmed the Christian Socialist ideal to counter the autonomy of culture, the state, and economic life but he challenged their program to "use the thought forms of Jesus as the law for every economic, racial, national, and international order."³⁴ He commended their criticism and doubts regarding the idols of this world but asserted that, in their earnest work towards change, they may fail to perceive the true meaning and might of the living God who is building a new world. Therefore, Barth warned against programmatic approaches to the building of a new society: "Surely we shall resist this temptation to betray society; it is no easier to bring it to Christ than Christ to it. For it is God's help that we still have really in mind. . . . God alone can save the world. When we approach the execution of our program we shall not be able, as the familiar warning goes, to reckon too soberly with 'reality'; and there is good reason why we should not, *rebus sic stantibus*—our ideals being impossible and our goals unattainable."³⁵

Rather than a program or a solution, Barth offered his audience a new standpoint or movement from which Christian hope and activity may proceed: the movement of God in history. He described this movement as "the movement whose power and import are revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This must be the gist of all our thinking about the Christian's place in society."³⁶

³³ *WGWM*, 277.

³⁴ *WGWM*, 280.

³⁵ *WGWM*, 280. Barth echoes Christoph Blumhardt's warning: "Mark this well: The Kingdom of God takes shape through nothing other than the coming of the Lord. It is not formed through any human discovery, no matter how worthy and honourable." Christoph Blumhardt, *Thy Kingdom Come: A Blumhardt Reader*, Vernard Eller, ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 79.

³⁶ *WGWM*, 283.

The new life from God is the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead in which the world of God broke through and appeared in secular life.³⁷ This life, Barth explained, opened the possibility of eternal life for humans, reminding them that the origin of the soul is in God. This awakening of the soul to the new immediacy of relationship with God is also an awakening to the human's relation to society. The awakened soul, according to Barth, involves the "sympathetic shouldering of the cares of the whole generation."³⁸ The Christian's agitation regarding the concerns of this world provokes an engagement in the revolt of life against the powers of death that enclose it. The Christian reflects on the problems and horrors of this world with the hope that this despair is not the final word. "The last word," Barth argued, "is the Kingdom of God—creation, redemption, the perfection of the world through God and in God."³⁹

In this essay, Barth attempted to offer a Christological vision for the relationship between the Christian and Society. He opposed idealistic solutions and programs and introduced a new way of *approaching* society that was grounded in the hope of God's personal movement of salvation for the world in Christ. People cannot be saved through programs but through the person of God in Christ. Secondly, Barth introduced a new way of *looking at* society by seeing through the eyes of hope in Christ, eyes of hope which recognise life proceeding from death and see the work of God in the world. Finally, Barth proposed a new way of *relating* to society resulting from a new relationship with God through Christ.

According to Barth, the task of the Christian in society is to live in the priestly agitation or unrest of this hope that helps to clarify the way to the solution in God. The Christian takes part in Christ's subversion and the conversion of this society while awaiting the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

For it is by the very fact of our living here and now that we are conscious alike of our fall and, in the likeness of the eternal, of the promise to us. *This* corruptible, must put on incorruption and *this* mortal must but on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53). We must enter fully into the subversion and conversion of this present and every conceivable world, into the judgement and the grace which the presence of God entails,

³⁷ *WGWM*, 288.

³⁸ *WGWM*, 290.

³⁹ *WGWM*, 297. I have chosen to explicate only the first half of this essay. The second half deals with analogy that I plan to develop more fully in the following chapter on Barth. For Barth's development of the idea during this phase, see McCormack, 200-202.

unless, remaining behind, we wish to fall away from Christ's truth, which is the power of the resurrection. We cannot look on at this subversion and conversion as pious or clever observers nor escape it by walking down the broad, light, well-filled streets of the romanticists and humanists.⁴⁰

The subversion and conversion of humanity was not a program which Barth promoted but an entirely new approach in God to human life based upon the creative and redemptive work of God in Christ.

Therefore, this speech substantiated Barth's turn away from his liberal training and his new emphasis on the transcendence of God, and his eschatological hope in God's Kingdom established in Christ. His former professor, Harnack, found Barth's speech appalling, commenting to a friend, "The effect of Barth's lecture was just staggering. Not one word, not one sentence could I have said or thought. I saw the sincerity of Barth's speech but its theology frightened me."⁴¹ He believed that Barth's approach to theology was apocalyptic and self-negating, finding Barth's turn to eschatological hope the most offensive aspect of his new theological developments.⁴² Despite criticism, Barth continued to refine his theology in this direction. The following year, he turned again to his commentary on Romans in order to rework his new ideas.

Second Commentary on *Romans*: God's Judgement and Justice in the State

Barth's struggle against the humanism of his day and his desire to found social ethics upon a foundation which transcended human social ethics is also manifested in his second edition of *Romans*.⁴³ Barth issued his critique for both approaches to political ethics that predominated in Protestant circles. He sought to emphasise the person and work of God over against the attempts by humans to establish political justice.

Barth argued against the legitimisation of the state and the attempt by men and women to rule over one another. In Romans 13, he contended that the evil in government is not found in the defect of a governmental system but in the very right for government to *exist* at all. Human persons should not dare to claim a right over other

⁴⁰ *WGWM*, 317-318.

⁴¹ Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1951), 415.

⁴² Gary Dorrien, *The Barthian Revolution in Modern Theology*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 61.

⁴³ John Webster makes a similar argument with regard to human action in *Barth's Moral Theology*, 27-28.

humans, should not dare to regulate their conduct, should not exercise power over other men and women.⁴⁴ Thus, against the idolatries of bourgeois Protestantism, Barth argued that the state cannot be legitimised.

Yet Barth also sought to critique those who desired to overthrow the state. Humans cannot establish justice by overthrowing the state either, he argued. Barth warned that in the revolutionary battle to rid the state of evil by overthrowing the existing power, the revolutionary himself is overcome by evil as he attempts to make things right, in place of Christ. "The sense of right which has been wounded by the existing order is not restored to health when that order is broken. *Overcome evil with good*. What can this mean but the end of the triumph of men, whether their triumph is celebrated in the existing order or by revolution?"⁴⁵

Barth argued against both approaches to the state because of his overarching concern to critique human attempts to establish the Kingdom of God and his growing distrust of human judgement. In his effort to correct the glorification of humanity which both of these approaches held in common, he emphasised the person and work of God. According to Barth, both the ruling order and revolution must be left to God because God alone could judge and God alone could establish good.

In his exegesis of the text, he interpreted the first verse as a critique of autonomous human judgement and action. *Let every man be in subjection to the existing ruling powers* (Rom. 13:1a). Barth described subjection as withdrawal, making way, having no resentment, and not seeking to overthrow. The rebel's conflict, Barth argued, is not against ruling powers but against evil. If a revolution (even a non-violent revolution) against government brings evil, then the rebel and the rulers stand on the same side, with the existing order of evil. Barth writes, "*Let every man be in subjection* means, therefore, that every man should consider the falsity of all human reckoning as such. . . . It's meaning is that men have encountered God, and are thereby compelled to leave judgement to him."⁴⁶

Barth unpacked the remainder of the verse, *For there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God* (Rom. 13:1b). Although this passage seems to affirm the authority of the government, Barth claimed that the important aspect is the

⁴⁴ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn Hoskyns, (London: O.U.P., 1933), 479.

⁴⁵ *Romans*, 480-81.

⁴⁶ *Romans*, 483-84.

declaration that the powers are measured by reference to God, as are all human things. Because God both justifies and condemns the powers, the human may not claim to judge in the place of God by taking judgement and assault into his own hands. Rather, the revolutionary should recognise that the evil of the existing order bears witness to the good and bears witness to God.⁴⁷

In the second verse, Barth argued that judgement and revolution must be left to God. *Therefore, he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand draw to themselves judgement* (Rom. 13:2). According to Barth, real revolution comes not from human revolt but from God. The rebel's attempt to bring in the 'New Creation' by judging and protesting the powers end in condemnation upon himself. Rather, the revolutionary learns several things from the governing powers: God's revolt creates order; God's disclosure cannot be effected by human action; and the rebel learns to practice the humility that will guard against contempt. Barth exclaims, "Behind the existing order—which may itself be new!—stands God. He is the Judge, and He is the Right. Insubordination—and there is also a conservative insubordination!—is insubordination against Him."⁴⁸

How then does the Judge establish the good? According to Barth, the only possibility of overcoming evil is the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ who is the true answer to the injury wrought by the existing order.⁴⁹

Barth himself later acknowledged that his enthusiasm to correct the humanism of his day by emphasising the deity of God lacked the comprehensiveness found in his later work. His approach needed the Christology of his future years, which integrated

⁴⁷ Barth addressed the conservatives, "The supporters of the present order, who may feel encouraged by what has been said, must, however, be reminded that revolution has been *ordained* as evil, in order that they may bear witness to the good; and this means, on order that they may themselves be without justification and utterly unromantic, in order, in fact, that they too may turn and become from henceforth disordered." *Romans*, 485.

⁴⁸ *Romans*, 486.

⁴⁹ Such an emphasis in Barth's work at this stage has led to the popular belief that he was excluding human social action (see for example the critique of Barth's early writings by R.E. Willis, *The Ethics of Karl Barth* and J. Cullberg, *Das Problem der Ethik in der dialektischen Theologie I. Karl Barth*). John Webster argues that Barth emphasised the resurrection of Christ in order to liberate human action from absolutism. Webster explained, "His emphasis on transcendence, otherness, the 'higher order', is clearly not designed to exclude social action but to relativise it: to sever the bond which Roth and his heirs established between positive affirmation of the social order and the Kingdom of God, and at the same time to sever the similar bond which religious socialists established between social protest and the kingdom." (*Barth's Moral Theology*, 22.) Barth's concern was not to decimate human action but to critique the glorification of humanity by raising the contrast of God's overarching deity and goodness.

the deity of God with humanity in Christ.⁵⁰ Yet this stage of his development is vital for interpreting his later work because the major themes, though a bit unbalanced, remain throughout his works and the context of this stage provides the explanation for Barth's overriding concerns. First, in his reaction to the glorification of humanity, which dominated German ideology, Barth condemned the human arrogance that attempts to rule over others or judge others. All rule and judgement must be left to God. Second, Barth condemned the human attempt to establish Good or to instate the Kingdom of God apart from the work of Jesus Christ. God alone establishes justice.

Reformed Theology and the Justice of God for Humanity

When Barth became a professor in Germany at Göttingen and began preparing his lectures on Reformed theology, he found in Luther, Calvin, and other reformers a theological resting place after his period of disillusionment with the deification of humanity by post-Enlightenment society.⁵¹ Barth embraced reformed theology because it "made the discovery that theology has to do with *God*. It made the great and shattering discovery of the real theme of all theology. The secret was simply this, that it took this theme seriously in all its distinctiveness, that it names God God, that it lets God be God, the one object that by no bold human grasping or inquiry or approach can be simply one object among many others."⁵²

Luther on God's Justice

Barth located in Luther his own dialectic between the righteousness of God and the sin of humanity. Luther first emphasised the offence of humanity's sin against God that characterises every aspect of human behaviour and human works. Secondly, he explained the positive proclamation about God: we are justified and we live by his grace. The hope of Christ's grace is made known, not by seeking to look at the invisible

⁵⁰ *The Humanity of God*, 44-45.

⁵¹ Although Barth also devoted a great deal of study to Zwingli during this period, he primarily found himself disappointed with that reformer's work. Thus, this work will focus primarily upon the two major influences upon Barth during this period: Luther and Calvin. See McCormack, 315 and Eduard Thurneysen, *Karl Barth—Eduard Thurneysen: Briefwechsel, 1921-1930*, (Zurich: TVZ, 1974), 132.

⁵² *The Theology of John Calvin*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 1995), 39. John Webster argues in *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* that Barth's entire dogmatics is an exposition of the existence/being of God, "God is." While it stood in contrast with the driving concerns of some German theologians, Barth found support and guidance for this starting point in the writings of the Reformers. Webster, *Ethics of Reconciliation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.

things of God, his majesty and glory, by way of spiritual vision but grace is made known by the revelation of God in the cross.⁵³ "True theology and the true knowledge of God lie, then, in the crucified Christ."⁵⁴ According to Barth, Luther turned from the medieval attention to a "theology of glory" to his own theology of the cross as the true theme for theology, the only hope for human sin, and the centre for "faith as naked trust that casts itself into the arms of God's mercy."⁵⁵

Barth was drawn to the theology of Luther and he continued to study his works and to reflect on the implications of justification by faith for social justice. Barth drew these implications out powerfully in the course of his later dialogue with Catholic theology. Upon first discovering Luther, however, Barth found himself disappointed by Luther's failure to make the outworking of ethics of primary importance so he turned to Calvin who "made the Reformation capable of dealing with the world and history when he hammered the faith of Luther into obedience."⁵⁶

John Calvin: Christ as the Foundation for Theology

John Calvin influenced Barth in two vital aspects of theology as they relate to Barth's social ethics: Scripture and Christology. First, Calvin's doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture provided for Barth the rule of life and faith. Barth wrote:

Scripture did not play quite the same part in Reformed Protestantism as in Lutheran. It's dignity here was one of principle as it never was in Lutheranism, no matter how highly the latter regarded it. Introducing reformation now meant establishing the Word of God in the Bible as the norm of faith and life. The Reformed church is first of all the school in which we learn and then the institution in which we are brought up. The right attitude is first one of docility, then of obedience. Scripture is the guide and teacher.⁵⁷

Barth defended the priority of the 'scripture principle' in Reformed Protestantism. He argued that such a principle was not legalistic but arose from "the quest for a norm by which to regulate the relations, the quest for a rule of faith and life, of knowledge and action."⁵⁸ Because Reformed Protestantism began as a rejection of the forms and orders

⁵³ *Calvin*, 42 -3.

⁵⁴ *Calvin*, 44.

⁵⁵ *Calvin*, 46.

⁵⁶ *Calvin*, 90 and 74.

⁵⁷ *Calvin*, 386.

⁵⁸ *Calvin*, 387.

required by Roman Catholicism, the reformers had to seek a new authority that could relate eternity to time and could provide new forms and orders for their faith. They found this authority in the Biblical text because it was "the place where God's revelation comes to us."⁵⁹ Calvin, in particular, forged the dogma of inspiration. Yet, according to Barth, Calvin never spoke of inspiration without also speaking of the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit as "the voice of truth that makes itself heard not merely in the Bible but also in the believing reader or hearer."⁶⁰ Thus, the authority of the Bible rests not merely upon the letter of the law but upon the Spirit of truth, which is *in* the letter *and* in the hearts of believers as the revelation of Jesus Christ.⁶¹

This revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture became the foundation for Barth's theology. Barth observed in Calvin, "Christ is from the first the key with which he unlocks the whole. Christ is that unspoken original presupposition in terms of which we see God *a priori* as the ground and goal, the one who judges us and shows us mercy, and in terms of which we see ourselves *a priori*, when measured against God, as sinners, and are thus pointed to grace."⁶² Barth defended Calvin against the accusation that Calvin forced Christian elements into a general metaphysical, philosophical view, arguing that Calvin did not separate natural and supernatural knowledge except to show that supernatural revelation "is the pair of spectacles by which to read the Word of God in nature and history."⁶³ Therefore, Barth's study of Calvin influenced his own theological method. At this early stage, Barth found articulation for the foundation of his own dogmatics and ethics: Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture.

⁵⁹ Calvin, 167.

⁶⁰ Calvin, 167.

⁶¹ Calvin, 167.

⁶² Calvin, 164.

⁶³ McCormack uses this passage to demonstrate that Barth did not exclude the possibility that God could speak in nature and history at this stage. One must be careful not to misconstrue McCormack's interpretation. Barth is not writing here of a "natural theology" or a revelation of God in nature which could be understood through the witness of the Holy Spirit. Barth clearly argues that natural knowledge is not understood properly apart from the revelation of Christ in the Bible. Barth writes, "without the biblical revelation that defines God the Redeemer, Calvin sees no real knowledge of God the Creator, and conversely knowledge of God the Redeemer is simply a sharper and clearer seeing of the revelation of God the Creator. Materially the two forms of knowledge are exactly the same. We differentiate them only at once to grasp more truly their essential unity." Calvin, 163-164.

The Gospel of Christ as the Foundation for Ethics

As mentioned previously, Barth found the ethics of Luther inadequate to address the relation between the Christian and the world.⁶⁴ Whereas Luther recognised the vital doctrine of justification by faith, Calvin helped to describe the practical import of such doctrine in daily life.⁶⁵ Barth characterised Calvin's ethics in his 1536 *Institutes*, "When at the end Calvin seeks to speak expressly as an ethicist in the more precise sense, we do not have an added second or new thing, nor the law as a second thing alongside the gospel. His concern is simply for a right use of the freedom that is opened up for us by the gospel."⁶⁶ Barth adopted this pattern he ascribed to Calvin in his *Christian Dogmatics* by attributing a gospel foundation to all of his ethical claims, making faith the basis of his ethics.⁶⁷

In his summary of Calvin's 1536 *Institutes*, Barth spent a relatively large portion of his lecture discussing Calvin's political ethics.⁶⁸ Barth emphasised the framework of freedom for Calvin's political ethics. Rather than promoting a program such as a Christian state, Christian Socialism, or an ideal state, Calvin rested his ethics on the will and command of God. He distinguished the civil order from the spiritual reign of Christ yet not in contradiction to it. Barth summarises, "The rights of government and law and the duty of citizens to obey arise only out of Christian freedom. For in government and law we encounter the order of God that Christians, in particular, should not seek to avoid."⁶⁹

Barth found three trains of thought in Calvin's doctrine of the state and society. First, Calvin recognised a positive dignity ascribed to the authorities by God. Though he called it "puzzling," Barth interpreted Calvin's positive view of government as a reaction to fanatics who opposed the government and an affirmation of "something divinely significant, a reflection of the majestic divine right that he did not wish to be

⁶⁴ *Calvin*, 74-76. Barth ascribed this to Luther's background as a monk. He argues that Calvin's constant engagement with the world enabled him to move from dogmatics to ethics more practically.

⁶⁵ Barth describes Calvin's theology as "simply a new edition of Luther's with a greater stress on ethics." *Calvin*, 118.

⁶⁶ *Calvin*, 194.

⁶⁷ *Calvin*, 194 and 197.

⁶⁸ In the English translation, Barth's discussion of Calvin's political ethics comprises over one-third of his summary of the 1536 *Institutes* (25 pages out of 70 total) whereas in the English translation of Calvin's work, Calvin devoted a mere 20 pages of 225 to this subject.

⁶⁹ *Calvin*, 208.

assailed on obvious rational grounds.”⁷⁰ Secondly, Calvin viewed the law as providing legitimacy to government. God’s law as revealed to Moses is “a witness to, and co-knowledge of that natural law which God has engraven on every human soul.”⁷¹ The content of this law is the eternal will of God that we worship him and love one another. The moral, revealed law explicates the natural law and can be summarised by the concept of “equity,” the form in which God’s law to love God and neighbour appears in human laws. Surprisingly, Barth did not object to Calvin’s theory of natural law as “innate in everyone,”⁷² though he did call Calvin’s ideal of equity “pagan-sounding” and “imperfect.”⁷³ He interpreted Calvin’s reference to natural law in the same way he interpreted Calvin’s “natural knowledge”: as formed on the basis of God’s divine command.⁷⁴

The third train of thought was “People and Government,” in which Calvin posed the question, “May we and should we accept the state in practice?” Calvin answered this question in the affirmative, emphasising the duty of subjects to rulers. From his own tendency to question and challenge the government, Barth wrestled with Calvin’s positive view of the state. He argued that Calvinism always resulted in a reforming, unsettling, and even revolutionary effect on state life and that Calvin provided bars to tyranny in the state.⁷⁵ Thus, in the end, Barth agreed with this affirmation of government, though only “in a parabolic sense, not directly, but indirectly, not as it stands but in its relation, as a temporal image of the eternal righteousness of God, to what is thus its meaning and origin.”⁷⁶

In summary, following Barth’s disillusionment with the human foundations for ethics found in both Protestant Liberalism and Religious Socialism, Barth discovered in the Reformers the exaltation of God, the God who both condemns humanity and who embraces humanity through the justifying work of Christ. He recognised in Luther’s doctrine of the justification by faith the work of God’s justice for humanity. In future

⁷⁰ *Calvin*, 214.

⁷¹ *Calvin*, 215.

⁷² *Calvin*, 215.

⁷³ *Calvin*, 216.

⁷⁴ *Calvin*, 216.

⁷⁵ *Calvin*, 216 and 224-6.

⁷⁶ *Calvin*, 221.

reflection, he would draw out the implications of this doctrine as a foundation for human justice.

Barth embraced the work of Calvin because the Scripture principle, which affirmed God's revelation of himself in Scripture, provided Barth with a sure source for his theology and ethics.⁷⁷ Scripture reveals the foundation of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ. Prior to his encounter with Calvin, Barth's approach had been dominated by his reaction and critique to the humanism of his day. Though his criticism provided some constructive new ways to approach social justice, his Christological foundation for social ethics based upon the revelation of God in Scripture took form through the influence of Reformed theology.⁷⁸

Two Critiques of Barth's Christological Ethics

Barth soon encountered criticism from both Catholic and Protestant theologians who claimed that his dialectical theology lacked a point of contact with general humanity. The Catholics sought this point of contact in the *analogia entis* while Protestants found it in natural theology. Barth critiqued both sides for seeking to exalt the human person and for grounding ethics in an unrealistic glorification of the human person. In this section, we have chosen two controversies in which this critique by Barth comes to the fore: Barth's lively encounter with Catholic theologian Erich Przywara and his heated debate with Emil Brunner. In Barth's argument that social ethics must derive from a distinctly Christological understanding of the human person, he issued a strong "Nein" to these men on both theological shores because he clearly saw the destruction wrought by the exaltation of human ethics in both of their theological systems. First, in his discussion with Augustine scholar, Erich Przywara, Barth claimed that Augustine's appeal to the *analogia entis* betrayed a basic misunderstanding of grace and human personhood. Second, Barth's strong response to Brunner demonstrated his continued plea for a distinctly Christological ethic which appealed to the Word of God alone, over against the idolatrous exaltation of human ethics in natural theology.

⁷⁷ See John Webster's argument that Barth's turn from the liberal theology was influenced by the ethics of the Reformed tradition in *Barth's Moral Theology*, 61-62.

⁷⁸ Although this examination has been limited to the influences of Luther and Calvin, it is important to note Barth's appreciation of the reformed confessions and of reformed theologians such as Heinrich Heppe. See Busch, 126-163.

Przywara's Complaint: Barth Undermines the Unity of God with Humanity

Barth's conversation with Catholicism essentially began when he took up a professorship at the University in the predominantly Catholic city of Munster in 1925. In 1929, Barth invited the Polish Jesuit, Erich Przywara, to Munster to give a lecture to his students. Barth had encountered Przywara seven years prior through an article in which the Jesuit critiqued Barth's inability to sustain a concept of God's immanence in balance with Barth's important emphasis on the transcendence of God. Przywara contrasted Barth's "wholly other God" with Augustine's God of the "*analogia entis*."⁷⁹ The Jesuit theologian objected to Barth's replacement of the notion of 'analogy' between God and the creature with "pure negation."⁸⁰ Przywara wrote, "If the *analogia entis* of the Catholic concept of God means the mysterious tension of a 'similar-dissimilar,' corresponding to the tension of the 'God in us and above us,' then in the Protestant concept of God, the 'similarity' has been completely crossed out."⁸¹ In this original article, Przywara accused Barth of a one-sidedness of relationship that rejected any unity of God with humankind. Such one-sidedness, Przywara claimed, undermined both a theology of Incarnation and an ecclesiology that accounts for the continuing presence of God in the world.⁸² Thus, Przywara had discerned that the problem of Barth's dialectical theology regarded the possibility of bridging the gulf between God and humanity. Przywara wanted to bridge this gulf by emphasising the shared being of God and humanity grounded in the doctrine of the *analogia entis*.

Barth responded to Przywara in a lecture given later that year, "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life."⁸³ In each part, he criticised the theology of Augustine, believing that, "as long as we do not root Augustinianism completely out of the

⁷⁹ Rich Przywara, "Gott in uns oder über uns? (Immanenz und Transzendenz im heutigen Geistesleben)," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 105 (1923):344, quoted in McCormack, 320.

⁸⁰ McCormack points out that Barth set aside the way of 'pure negation' in favour of the 'dialectic way' in Barth's article, "The Word of God as the Task of Theology."

⁸¹ McCormack, 350.

⁸² McCormack, 321.

⁸³ Karl Barth, "Der heilige Geist und das christliche Leben," in Karl Barth and Heinrich Barth, *Zur Lehre vom heiligen Geist*, Beiheft I of *Zwischen den Zeiten* (Munich: Chr. Kaister Verlag, 1930), 39-105; *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis for Ethics (HSCL)*, translated by R. Birch Hoyle, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993). There is much evidence that this essay is a response to Przywara and the larger dialogue with Catholic theology, including Barth's engagement with Augustine (rather than Aquinas), the discussion of the *analogia entis*, continuity/discontinuity, and similarity/dissimilarity (see for example 8-10, 60) as well as his repeated use of Przywara's phrase, "tranquil and assured," at key points in his presentation (see 8, 9, 22).

doctrine of grace, we will never have a Protestant theology."⁸⁴ Why did Barth respond so strongly to Przywara's critique and Augustine's theology? Because he recognised in Catholic theology a similar problem to liberal protestant theology: the potential glorification of the human.

The first problem Barth located concerned the *analogia entis*.⁸⁵ Barth rejected any continuity between God and the human at creation. Rather creatureliness consists of God's continually giving through his revelation. Barth argued that the creaturely spirit cannot *produce* the word of God by presuming knowledge about his word as a result of continuity or by giving lists of moral counsels confidently taken from scripture. He wrote, "An ethics that thinks it can know and set forth the command of God, the Creator, plants itself upon the throne of God."⁸⁶ Nor can the creaturely spirit *receive* the Word of God unassisted.⁸⁷ Barth explained, "The fundamental significance of the Holy Spirit for the Christian life is that this, our participation in the occurrence of revelation, is just our *being grasped* in this occurrence which is the effect of the *divine* action."⁸⁸ Thus, in opposition to the *analogia entis* as a foundation for ethics, Barth argued that the only foundation for ethics is revelation of God's Word in the Holy Spirit who meets the creature and points to him his way as creature.⁸⁹

The second problem Barth addressed was the Augustinian doctrine of reconciliation. Barth argued that Augustine had too weak a view of human sin and

⁸⁴ Barth, *HSCL*. Barth critiques Augustine's eschatological failures in the final part. See 60-68.

⁸⁵ Later interpreters criticised Barth for misrepresenting Przywara's *analogia entis*. Von Balthasar defended Przywara, "Rightly understood, the analogy of being is the destruction of every system in favour of a totally objective availability of the creature for God and for the divine measure of the creature." [Von Balthasar, 255.] Von Balthasar conceded that Przywara did not make his answer to Barth's objections clear until his publication in the following decade (Ibid, footnote 5). Jüngel described Barth's early notion of this doctrine as a "horrible phantom" that Barth later relinquished after he adopted a type of analogical method (*analogia fides*) as the starting point of his own theology. [Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. Darrell Guder, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 282-283]. The work of Alan Torrance has resolved Jüngel's criticism by clarifying Barth's objection as a rejection of *analogia entis* as a metaphysical principle that provides the foundation for theological methodology. [Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 162-63. See also later discussion in Chapter Seven, Section titled: "Human Ontology and Epistemic Access to Justice.] McCormack brought some resolution to the matter: "In all likelihood, [Barth] was simply indicating that the phrase *analogia entis* carries more freight than Przywara personally would allow. Barth saw in this phrase the ill-advised attempt to order both God and humankind into a higher concept, namely of 'being'; to make both God and humankind simply differing exemplifications of being in order then to ascend from a knowledge of creaturely being to a knowledge of God (natural theology)." McCormack, 389.

⁸⁶ *HSCL*, 10.

⁸⁷ *HSCL*, 10.

⁸⁸ *HSCL*, 6.

⁸⁹ *HSCL*, 11.

human grace, "Augustine's view of sin was that it was really only a wound, a derangement within the undisturbed continuity of man with God."⁹⁰ Grace, then, is a "synergism" of "divine gift and man's creative action combined into one."⁹¹ The Role of the Holy Spirit is to impart "a divine quality inhering in the soul" which "uplifts man by and by until he is made a non-sinner."⁹² Barth balked at such theology for its failure to take sin seriously.⁹³ Grace is the righteousness that is imputed to us, "alien," 'external' righteousness" or "the righteousness that comes from without."⁹⁴ Rather than the creature working his way up to God, God has come to the creature and He has justified him. Sin is independence from this justification, the attempt to do good works without it, the unbelief in the self-giving of God. Barth continued to warn of this human tendency to 'control' rather than 'surrender,' to judge what is right rather than trusting the umpire, the Holy Spirit who alone knows what is Christian and what is not Christian. Thus, Barth challenged the arrogance of the creature who thinks he finds righteousness in his autonomous self. Such arrogance wreaks destruction in human ethics because it idolises the creature rather than hearing and receiving through the Spirit the righteous Word of God.

The Protestant Critique: Brunner and Natural Theology

The second and far stronger "Nein" Barth issued in this period was against the attempt by Brunner to establish a natural theology as the basis for ethics. Brunner's question was a valid one to pose to Barth. Because Barth grounded ethics in his theology of judgement and grace, Brunner questioned Barth's ability to find a point of contact with non-Christian ethics that would allow for dialogue. He argued that Barth could not communicate to non-Christians an ethic that depends upon the grace of God to be understood and he said that natural theology provided that point of contact.

⁹⁰ *HSCL*, 23.

⁹¹ *HSCL*, 22.

⁹² *HSCL*, 23.

⁹³ Barth wrote, "Sin is not taken in deadly earnest when it is regarded as something that can be radically overcome by the enthusiasm of 'good intentions' and then, by and by, can be removed by practical activity." *HSCL*, 23.

⁹⁴ *HSCL*, 26.

The political developments in Germany concurrent with Brunner's article help to explain the force of Barth's "Nein."⁹⁵ Hitler and the National Socialists had forced their way to power in January 1933 and systematically sought to undermine and eventually destroy the churches by imposing a "German Christian church" which held to the tenets of National Socialism alongside the Christian gospel. Barth spoke out boldly during this time against the idolatry of any ideology besides or alongside the gospel of grace and he argued against the authority of any human over the church.⁹⁶ He declared that the church "could have no other gods than God, that holy scripture was enough to guide the church into all truth, that the grace of Jesus Christ was enough to forgive our sins and order our life."⁹⁷

Nature and Grace

Writing from Switzerland, Brunner questioned Barth's ethical foundation in this gospel of grace. In his essay, Brunner proposed six theses to counter "Barth's false conclusions." As an introduction to his first thesis, Brunner divided the *imago Dei* into the "formal" image and the "material" image of God. The *formal* image is that which differentiates the human from an animal and consists in the human person as subject (possessed of capacity for words and rational) and the human's responsibility. The *material* image, on the other hand, has been lost because, "man is a sinner through and through and there is nothing in him which is not defiled by sin."⁹⁸ In his second thesis, Brunner claimed that there are two kinds of revelation: revelation in Creation and revelation in Jesus Christ. Although creation is not sufficient for salvation because "sin makes man blind for what is visibly set before our eyes,"⁹⁹ he argued that God has bestowed a "capacity for revelation"¹⁰⁰ upon his works. Only those people whose eyes have been opened by Christ, those who stand within the revelation of Christ, can gain a true natural knowledge of God.

⁹⁵ Trevor Hart argues this point in "The Capacity for Ambiguity," in *Regarding Karl Barth*, (Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1999), 144.

⁹⁶ Busch, 236. (Quoted from *Gottes Wille und unsere Wunsche*, *Theologische Existenz heute* 7, 3-9.)

⁹⁷ Busch, 227. (Quoted from *Selbstdarstellung*, 1964.)

⁹⁸ Brunner, "Nature and Grace," in *Natural Theology: Comprising 'Nature and Grace' by Emil Brunner and the Reply 'No!' by Karl Barth*, Peter Fraenkel, trans., (London: Centenary Press, 1946), 24.

⁹⁹ "Nature and Grace," 25.

¹⁰⁰ "Nature and Grace," 27.

Third, Brunner argued for a notion of God's gracious preservation as his presence to those who are fallen. His fourth thesis stated that the sphere of preserving grace contains "ordinances" that form a basic part of all ethical problems. He differentiated between an "ordinance of creation" such as marriage which was instituted by the Creator and the "ordinance of preservation" which was given by God as a result of sin, arguing that both of these are created and maintained by instinct and reason, by nature's unconscious action and by the reason of the human person.

Fifth, Brunner contended for a "point of contact" between God's grace and man. He located this "point of contact" in the human persons's formal *imago Dei*, through which the human is receptive to the Word of God.¹⁰¹ Brunner wrote, "The sphere of this 'possibility of being addressed' includes not only the *humanum* [formal image] in the narrower sense, but everything connected with the 'natural' knowledge of God. The Word of God could not reach a man who had lost his consciousness of God entirely. . . . What the natural man knows of God, of the law and of his own dependence upon God, may be very confused and distorted. But even so it is the necessary, indispensable point of contact for divine grace."¹⁰² Brunner's final thesis stated that the subject, and the fact of self-consciousness, is not destroyed but repaired by the act of faith.¹⁰³ The remainder of Brunner's pamphlet comprised a defence based upon his interpretation of the Reformers and an explication of the significance of natural theology for the church.

Karl Barth perceived Brunner's essay as "an alarm signal" indicating the danger of compromise which threatened the purity and unity of the theology of the Evangelical Church.¹⁰⁴ Thus, he replied to Brunner with a violent, "*Nein!*" and rejected natural theology which he defined as "every (positive or negative) *formulation of a system* which claims to be theological, *i.e.* to interpret divine revelation, whose *subject*, however, differs fundamentally from the revelation in Jesus Christ and whose *method* therefore differs equally from the exposition of Holy Scripture."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ "Nature and Grace," 32.

¹⁰² "Nature and Grace," 32-33.

¹⁰³ "Nature and Grace," 33. Brunner argues that Galatians 2:20 demonstrates that "the formal personality continues beyond the death of the material."

¹⁰⁴ Barth, "No!" in *Natural Theology: Comprising 'Nature and Grace' by Emil Brunner and the Reply 'No!' by Karl Barth*, Peter Fraenkel, trans., (London: Centenary Press, 1946), 69. He writes, "The real danger seems to me to lie in a future attitude of the Church and of theology which is informed by the spirit of the many on both sides to-day who are undecided and ready for compromise and which might stand at the end of all that we are now going through."

¹⁰⁵ "No!" 74-75.

Barth's "Nein!"

In a later reflection on Barth's negative response, Reformed theologian, Edward Dowey, criticised Barth for misunderstanding Brunner on two accounts: Brunner's aims regarding natural theology and Brunner's interpretation of John Calvin as a supporter of such aims. Dowey argued that Brunner was not seeking an independent natural theology to stand over against God's revelation in Scripture (as Barth's definition implied), but a "Christian *theologia naturalis*, i.e. for Christian theological thinking which tries to account for the phenomena of natural life."¹⁰⁶ He concluded that both Karl and his brother, Peter Barth, interpreted Brunner's essay inaccurately.¹⁰⁷ However, Barth's objection was not a matter of conflicting definitions of natural theology as Dowey supposed. Barth struck at the very aim, method, content, and ethical implications of Brunner's theology, arguing that there can be no valid Christian understanding of creation, nature, or sin apart from Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁸

In contrast to Dowey, I would argue that with regard to the aim of theology, Barth opposed Brunner's definition of the theological task: "to find a way back to a true *theologia naturalis*."¹⁰⁹ Barth argued that the only aim of theology could be to understand God as he revealed himself. This additional aim of Brunner's displayed his preoccupation with a *subject* other than Christ.

Secondly, Barth criticised Brunner's theological method both for its abstract speculation and his use of natural theology as a hermeneutical tool. For example, Barth claimed that Brunner went beyond what is revealed in Scripture by using speculative categories such as formal and material. Although such categories may have initially seemed straightforward in Brunner's essay, Barth pointed out that the lines between them became blurred and Brunner tended to include hints of the material in the formal *imago Dei* in a way which mislead and confused the reader. Although Brunner claimed a concern that the church's proclamation rest upon Holy Scripture as "the ultimate standard," Barth exposed Brunner's methodological fallacy of using human categories

¹⁰⁶ "No!" 30.

¹⁰⁷ Edward A. Dowey, *A Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, (London: Columbia University Press, 1964), 137-139 and 247-249.

¹⁰⁸ Alasdair Heron, *A Century of Protestant Theology*, (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1980), 88.

¹⁰⁹ "No!" 70.

that made natural theology (rather than Jesus Christ) the foundation for his theological speculations.

Third, Barth opposed Brunner's theology for failing to take seriously the impact of sin upon humanity. Barth posed two opposing options regarding epistemic access to God. (1) The human person is completely blind, idolatry (a false image of God) is the preparatory stage for knowledge of God, and Brunner's "*theologia naturalis*" is merely a systematic exposition of the history of religion, philosophy, and culture. (2) Or the human is capable of gaining real knowledge of the true God without Christ and without the Holy Spirit. According to Barth, Brunner's reference to a "point of contact" for redeeming grace blurred the lines between 'formal' and 'material' by indicating that a remainder of man's original righteousness, openness to God, or readiness to hear what God has to say. Barth argued that the Word of God does not rely upon human capacity in any sense. Rather, the Word overcomes humanity's resistance and opposition to God.¹¹⁰ Thus, Barth concluded, the Word does not need to merely perfect humanity but to create it anew.

The ethical and political implications of Brunner's claims were perhaps the greatest impetus for Barth's uncompromising reply. Barth feared the imminent danger of natural theology as a foundation for ethical and political decisions. He sought to reinforce the absolute impossibility for a human to hold up history or society as a foundation for discovering God-implanted orders in creation which shape political and ethical programs. Precisely such a foundation, Barth believed, had led to a Christian ideology which justified the domination of the Aryan race and to readings of history that supported the Nazi regime. By holding history and society and nature as valid foundations for knowledge about God, the German Christians built their ethics upon a faulty foundation and limited the freedom of the gospel to proclaim God's grace and his commands for humanity.

Writing from Switzerland, perhaps Brunner did not realise the implications of his argument for the existence of natural "ordinances which are the constant factors of historical and social life."¹¹¹ Though Barth conceded that such ordinances may indeed exist, he insisted that humans are unable to discern them or use them as a basis for speaking about God or ethics. He wrote:

¹¹⁰ "No!" 89 and Hart, 162-163.

¹¹¹ "Nature and Grace," 29.

No doubt there are such things as moral and sociological axioms which seem to underlie the various customs, laws and usages of different peoples, and seem to appear in them with some regularity. And there certainly seems to be some connection between these axioms and the instinct and reason which both believers and unbelievers have indeed every reason to allow to function in the life of the community. But what are these axioms? Or who—among us, who are ‘sinners through and through’!—decided what they are?¹¹²

Thus, Barth radically opposed Brunner by exposing that his *theologis naturalis* was not merely an inquiry into Christian knowledge but provided a foundation for human speculation. Despite Brunner’s claim to view creation through the spectacles of God’s revelation in Scripture,¹¹³ Barth’s strong retort revealed that Brunner’s aim, method, subject, and ethical implications did not find their basis in the revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture and for this reason held potential for the destructive nature of human ethics.

Because of this concern with Brunner’s approach, Barth came down even harder upon his own good friend than he had come against Catholic natural theology. He wrote:

I can hardly say a clear “No” to Hirsch and his associates, but close my eyes in the case of Brunner, the Calvinist, the Swiss “dialectical theologian.” For it seems clear to me that at the decisive point he takes part in the false movement of thought by which the Church today is threatened. . . . My polemic against Brunner is more acute than that against Hirsch, because his position is more akin to mine, because I believe him to be in possession of more truth, *i.e.* to be closer to the Scriptures, because I take him more seriously—because for that very reason he seems to me just now to be much more dangerous than a man like Hirsch.¹¹⁴

Because he saw Nazism as the primary enemy, Barth went so far as to line Brunner up with Hirsch in seeking to oppose any methodology that opened the door to the exaltation of human ethics over the command of God. His opposition to Brunner demonstrates that Barth’s critique of natural theology was not anti-Catholic¹¹⁵ but that

¹¹² “No!” 86.

¹¹³ Brunner took this metaphor from Calvin’s *Institutes* I.vi and xiv. T.H.L. Parker argues that Brunner did violence Calvin’s theology by interpreting these passages in this manner without regard to the whole of Calvin’s argument. Parker writes, “Calvin tells us, on the basis of the Biblical witness, that the faculty of perceiving the Creator in His works is not merely impaired, but lost; that man is not suffering from bad eyesight, but from total blindness.” See Parker, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God: A Study in the Theology of John Calvin* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952), 30-39.

¹¹⁴ “No!” 68.

¹¹⁵ For example, see Barth’s affirmation of Söhngen’s conception of the *analogia entis* in CD II.1.81.

his overriding concern was to oppose the methodology, arising from either tradition, which lacked the critical critique which Nazism made necessary.

In his responses to Brunner and Przywara, Barth did not explicitly answer the valid questions which were implied in their critiques: Does Barth's Christological ethic have a point of contact with common humanity? What does the gospel of grace have to do with the morality of a non-Christian society? Does the church, without a point of contact in natural theology or the *analogia entis*, lose her voice altogether? Barth's answers to these questions came more explicitly in his *Church Dogmatics*, which we will expound in the following two chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the reaction of Barth against the glorification of humanity in German society and in German theology. Barth first began to question the liberal theology under which he was trained when he encountered the misery of human persons who were oppressed by the social system which that theology supported and maintained. He began to realise that this theological approach had accepted too readily the tenants of culture and had thereby embraced the deification of humanity. Such theology was meaningless because it placed human opinion in the place of God's command and judgement. Liberalism provided no distinctly Christian critique for humanism or for the oppression which humanism wrought. Liberalism had no place for a God who is wholly other and who judges the injustice of humans against one another.

Barth's turn to religious socialism, which opposed the "dead God" of the liberals, provided little hope for him either. Whereas Liberalism had no basis for social critique, the religious socialists critiqued their opponents in the name of God, claiming to usher in God's Kingdom here on earth. Though he became intrigued with them for a time, their support of WWI led to Barth's disillusionment. He began to wonder if such critique should not also be turned inward. Certainly, religious socialism offered a needed critique of bourgeois culture, but who were they, as humans, to claim to speak the word of God and to establish the Kingdom of God? It was during this time that Barth posed the self-critical question, "Is it self-evident that 'we' 'represent' the Kingdom of God?"¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Karl Barth to Eduard Thurneysen, 6 August 1915, *Revolutionary Theology in the Making: Barth-Thurneysen Correspondence, 1914-1925*, trans., J. Smart, (London: Epworth, 1964), 69-70.

A needed reprieve came when Barth encountered the ministry of the Blumhardts. He observed men and women who worked to alleviate human suffering and who attempted to promote social justice yet they exuded a humility which struck Barth. The Blumhardts based their theology and their ministry upon a God who is wholly other, a God who breaks into human history and establishes his Kingdom. Barth's encounter with Blumhardts brought him an eschatological understanding of the Kingdom of God that affirmed *God's* work through Christ in society rather than autonomous human work for God. This affirmation led to Barth's new questions regarding the nature of God's revelation: how God makes himself known in the epistemological sense and also how one may perceive God's work in society.

Barth sought to understand this God through his study of scripture. His commentary on Romans articulated a dialectic between God and humanity, the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of humanity. As he argued in later essays and in his revision of the commentary on *Romans*, Barth clearly saw the implications of this dialectic for social issues. The righteousness of God that reveals the sin of humanity shows that humans can no longer put themselves in the place of judge or of ruler. Rule and judgement belongs to God alone. In this manner, he critiqued both the ruling class and the socialists who sought to overthrow them. Even at this early stage, Barth saw clearly that humans alone cannot establish justice. Rather, humans stand in need of the goodness of God and the justice of God found in the person of Jesus Christ.

Barth found in the Reformers the theology which supported his own discoveries and which furthered the development of his Christological approach and foundation for justice. However, this foundation was soon challenged by both Catholic and Protestant theologians who claimed that Barth was undermining human ethics altogether by making them dependent upon Christian doctrine. Again, Barth argued against their criticisms that by seeking a point of contact in creation rather than in Christ they were opening themselves to the danger of human approaches to justice and he believed that they lacked the fundamental criterion for judging when such approaches would lead to the sort of destructive idolatry of humanity that Barth was witnessing in pre-WWII Germany. "But what are these axioms?" Barth demanded, "Or who—among us, who are 'sinners through and through'!—decided what they are?"¹¹⁷ In the midst of an era that sought to deify the human person and to found social ethics upon human ideas,

¹¹⁷ "No!" 86.

Barth witnessed the destruction which such confidence wreaked and he sought a new foundation in Christ for understanding the human person under the judgement and grace of God and for approaching questions of social ethics. While this chapter traced how he came to this conclusion, began to construct his foundation, and battled against those who opposed him, the following chapter will explore the implications of a Christological foundation for the understanding of human persons and for the approach to social ethics.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE CRITERION FOR JUSTICE:
JESUS-CHRIST, THE COVENANT PARTNER OF GOD

In the previous chapter, we traced Barth's reaction against the approach to social ethics which dominated his context and which had no voice of critique for the destruction wrought by two world wars. Barth did not only try to chop off the leaves and the branches of this poisonous tree by addressing the symptoms of the problem. He also discerned the root of the problem and he hacked away mercilessly at the deification of the human person which was poisoning his society within and wreaking destruction on a global scale.

Barth argued that theology and ethics must start anew; his *Church Dogmatics* encapsulates that attempt to root out humanism by starting afresh with God. He contended that humans need not determine God or ethics based upon their own ideas because God himself has made himself known in the person of Jesus Christ. Rather than beginning with the human and then ascending to knowledge of God, Barth began with God in order to understand humanity.

In this chapter and in the chapter that follows, I will examine the implication of Barth's new starting point for political and economic ethics as developed in his *Church Dogmatics*. In this chapter, I will explore Barth's link between social ethics and theology by expounding Barth's doctrine of election and his doctrine of creation as they reveal the criteria for social justice. First, based on Barth's *Doctrine of God*, I will argue that Jesus Christ provides the criterion for social justice because covenant includes election and the command that creates human freedom. I will briefly explore the implications of Barth's Christological criterion for his general ethics.

The second section will address Barth's transition from general to special ethics. Whereas general ethics are the counterpart to Barth's doctrine of election, special ethics deal more specifically with concrete human action. I will seek to demonstrate that

Barth's special ethics are equally connected to his theology as were his general ethics. This connection is most evident in the methodology that he employed.

In the final section, I will argue that Barth's criterion for specific social ethics of creation is the person of Jesus Christ because Christ alone determines humanity. Whereas the humanistic approach to ethics begins with a universal notion of humanity and human rights before moving to specific ethical responsibility and action, Barth started with particular humanity in order to interpret universal humanity. His anthropology originated in the particular person Jesus Christ, the one elected to be covenant partner with God, the one who revealed true humanity uncorrupted by sin, and the one in whom humans have been elected to become the covenant partners of God and to be sanctified by the command of God. While Christ's divinity implies that he is man for God, his humanity implies that he is human for men and women, human in fellow-humanity, and the human who reveals that true humanity involves encounter with God and fellow-humans.¹ In other words, Christ made human solidarity a material reality by making himself one with humans.

In the political sphere, this Christological anthropology means that over against a narrow nationalism, the human is determined for being and activity as a member of his own nation as well as all of humanity.² This outward movement involves respecting the life of all humans and calling for justice in service to the world. With regard to human life, Barth argues for respect for one's own life and the life of others. In the economic sphere, Barth placed a special emphasis upon work as the human action that corresponds to God's providential rule. He appealed for the criterion of humanity in work, that work maintain the element of brotherliness. According to Barth, the criterion of humanity for political and economic life rests not upon ethics that are autonomous from theology but they are revealed in the very person of God as he is made known in Jesus Christ. Thus, I will argue that Barth's social ethics were determined by his Christological anthropology, specifically in the covenant of God with humanity which was established in Christ and in the real humanity revealed by Christ.

The following chapter, Chapter Six, will explore the link between Barth's social ethics and his doctrine of reconciliation. Barth argues that Christ provides not only the criterion, but the possibility for human justice through his life, death, and resurrection.

¹ CD III.4.116.

² CD III.4.286.

Christ's downward movement of incarnation revealed the justice of God's judgement and his justification of humanity so that humans might live in righteous relation with one another and work against injustice in this world. The upward movement of Christ revealed his kingly office and God's establishing of his Kingdom in this world. As citizens in the free Kingdom of God, Christians have been freed to work for justice in accordance with Christ's Lordship. The prophetic role of Christ is a movement outward in service to the world, in which the church co-operates through witness and service to the world. In this manner, Christ transforms human life so that we might be freed to participate in God's establishing of justice in this world. Thus, in chapters five and six, I will argue that Barth established a necessary connection of social ethics with Christian theology because he located the true dignity of personhood in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Specifically, as a reaction against the humanistic ethics of his day, Barth's Christological starting point provides the criterion for assessing true justice and the means for forming just persons in society.

The Criteria for Justice: The Election and Command of God

In contrast to the humanistic approaches to ethics that sought to move from universal notions of humanity or God to the particularity of autonomous human ethics, Barth sought to ground his ethics in the particular person of God as he revealed himself in Jesus Christ.³ Barth argued that *Jesus Christ alone provides the criterion for social justice because the covenant which God establishes with humanity in Jesus Christ includes the election of humanity and the command of God that creates human freedom*. We will unpack the significance of this argument by examining these two sides of God's gracious covenant: election and command.

God's Gracious Election

In 1936, Barth heard Peter Maury give a lecture titled, "Election and Faith," which laid the foundation for Barth's doctrine of election. In this essay, Maury proposed that the doctrine of election could not be treated in abstraction from Jesus Christ for "outside of Christ we know neither of the electing God, nor of His elect, nor of the act of election."⁴ Maury reasoned that if election is in Christ, it means that Christ

³ CD I.2.789-793.

⁴ Pierre Maury, *Erwahlung und Glaube*, (Theologische Studien, 8; Zurich: EVZ, 1940); quoted in McCormack, 457.

has taken human rejection upon himself and, as a result, the purposes of God for humans are positive. Rather than electing some and rejecting others, God in Christ rejects all and elects all. Maury wrote, "Each Christian knows that in Christ his life is rejected, and pardoned by grace; faced with the Cross he sees himself to be the unpardonable executioner of his Saviour, and at the same time the pardoned sinner whom nothing can separate from the love of God, which is in his Son."⁵ Thus, both the election and the rejection of humanity were realised in Christ, revealing God's love for humanity.

Barth incorporated Maury's thesis into his own thought, applying it in his Doctrine of God, as the first step towards understanding the link between God and humanity: the love of God for human persons revealed in the election of humanity in Christ. According to Barth, the subject of election is the Son of God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Christ is the subject because he is the elect, chosen by God to bear the sin of the human race and to accept the wrath that is the consequence of sin. In addition, Christ is the object of divine election. Christ is the subject of election because he is the electing God, the one who chooses the human race and chooses himself as the bearer of our sin and its consequences. Christ is also the object of election as the elected human person, the eternal son in human nature. Thus, Jesus Christ was elected to be the object of divine retribution and rejection, accepting the consequences for sin that humans deserved, and electing humankind to participation in his glory.⁶ Because of this election, Christ bridges the gap between God and humanity, "Himself God and Himself man, and so mediating between the two. In Him man sees and knows God."⁷ In this way, Jesus fulfils the eternal will and decree of God and he discloses this will to humanity: the divine election of grace.⁸

What, then, is the implication of this election of grace for the community and the individual? The election of grace is the election of a community, which witnesses to the whole world and summons the world to faith in Christ.⁹ The church witnesses to the fact that the choice of the "godless" individual to isolate herself from God is empty

⁵ Pierre Maury, *Predestination*, trans. Edwin Hudson, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1960), 65.

⁶ CD II.2.94.

⁷ CD II.2.94.

⁸ CD II.2.95.

⁹ CD II.2.195.

because she belongs to Christ and is elected by God in Christ, appointed for eternal life with God.¹⁰

Election and Command

Barth's chapter on theological ethics that follows his discussion of election sheds light on the unique character of this doctrine. Barth emphasised the covenant of God and the gospel of God as the basis of the law of God. The command of God for human behaviour takes place only within the election of humankind in Christ. Opposing the idea that the law is independent from the gospel (i.e., the human is given law, lives by the law, and joins the people of God through obedience to the law), Barth described election as God's act of grace to come to humans, to choose humans, and to establish a covenant with humans. Thus, the election of grace (rather than the giving of law) is the first element of the covenant. Barth wrote, "God elects himself to be gracious toward man, to be his Lord and Helper, and in so doing He elects man to be the witness to His glory."¹¹

Yet the doctrine of election did not comprise the whole of the concept of covenant. Barth asserted that God elected humans for a purpose: to be a partner in the covenant. Thus, the covenant is two-sided. Covenant includes (a) election, in that God elected himself to be God of his people on the other hand, and (b) command, because God elected his people to be his people.¹² As partners of the covenant, his people are ruled over by God; He wants their obedience and service, "He wills to take him into his service, to commission him for a share in his own work."¹³ In this way, God's Word is both Gospel and Law, "as the one Word of God which is the revelation and work of his Grace reaches us, its aim is that our being and action should be conformed to His."¹⁴

¹⁰ CD II.2.306.

¹¹ CD II.2.510.

¹² As Colin Gunton stated, "Election is to a particular kind of life." "The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature," in S.W. Sykes, ed., *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 51. See also John Webster, *Ethics of Reconciliation*, 48-50 and P.D. Matheny, *Dogmatics and Ethics*, (New York: P. Lang, 1990), 166-270 on the ethical implications of Barth's doctrine of election.

¹³ CD II.2.512.

¹⁴ CD II.2.512.

Command Ethics

Barth calls the ethics which are connected with election, "general ethics" because they deal with the question of understanding generally the fact and the extent to which good human action is effected by the action of God in His command. General ethics show that the command of God is always God's decision about the right or wrong of human action. The command claims humans and decides God's judgement of grace by which the human person is free for good action and free for eternal life. Barth wrote that the command of God is the human's sanctification, "Good human action is set free by the command of God, by His claim and decision and judgement."¹⁵ Thus, through election, God elects himself to be the God of his people and through his command he elects his people to be his people. His command is judgement because he decides what is justice in the social sphere of human relations yet it is gracious judgement because it sets humans free from their destructive self-glorification so that they might live justly in the social sphere.

Command Ethics and the Problem of Human Freedom

Numerous critics of Barth's work claim that this theology limits human freedom and self-determination as ethical beings.¹⁶ Certainly on the surface, Barth's command ethics can appear to portray God as a totalitarian ruler who chooses humans and forces his leadership upon them, thus limiting their freedom. His work has often been interpreted in this manner. However, recent research by Colin Gunton and John Webster has highlighted Barth's multi-faceted affirmation of human freedom.¹⁷ Barth's theology of command and election provides for human freedom in three ways.

¹⁵ CD III.4.5.

¹⁶ J. Cullberg was among the first of many critics to argue that Barth's concept of God overwhelmed and negated any real sense of human agency. *Das Problem*, 18 and 29; H. von Balthasar criticised Barth for yielding to a metaphysics structured around his conception of revelation and election which causes the response of the creature to become ambiguous. (*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 242-246.) See also Elizabeth Vincent, *Ethics from Above or Below?* PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1993 and Willis, 199.

¹⁷ Webster and Gunton have argued that much of the misunderstanding lay in Enlightenment presuppositions regarding human freedom and autonomy against which Barth was reacting. Webster provides the most thorough argument that Barth's theology maintains the freedom of humanity in *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* and *Barth's Moral Theology*. With regard to election and human freedom, Gunton ascribes partial fault of the persistent misunderstanding to the inadequacy of Barth's pneumatology. He has suggested that Barth's modal conception of God undermined particularity in Barth's Christology and destabilised the balance between divine and human freedom. Gunton prefers the pneumatological approach to election by Edward Irving because it gives more weight to the distinctive functions of the Spirit while affirming the humanity of Christ and, thus, human freedom. [Colin Gunton, "The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature," in *Karl Barth*, ed. S.W. Sykes, 59-64.] John Webster

First, Barth argues that the leadership of Christ does not usurp particularity but gives freedom and responsibility to the individual:

The Christian concept of election does not involve this despoiling of the many for the sake of the one. On the contrary, when Jesus Christ is the elected One, the election and the accompanying mystery of individuality and solitude, and with it the freedom and responsibility and the authority and the power of the many, are not abrogated, but definitively confirmed in this Other. He is not the object of the divine election of grace instead of them, but on their behalf. . . . He is what he is and has what He has, in his revelation and imparting of it to the many.¹⁸

Thus, Christ rules through his service to his people, allowing for and enhancing their particularity.

Secondly, the election and command of God does not restrict human freedom because it creates human freedom. According to Barth, the person who is severed from the Creator and the Lord is the human person who is a slave of the created world and of himself. As contrasted to this slavery of godlessness, the election and command of God brings freedom to live by the grace of God. God's election does not disqualify humanity but intimately sets humanity upon its feet, "specifying, founding, and centring human self-determination."¹⁹ Thus, the command relieves the human from slavery to the created world by drawing him to God.²⁰

In this doctrine, Barth opposed the Enlightenment description of human autonomy in two ways.²¹ First, he argued against the possibility of an autonomous human choice *for* God. God has elected himself to be God *for* humans, Barth argued,

balances Gunton's work by demonstrating the emphasis upon the Spirit in Barth's ethics and the freedom that arises from Barth's pneumatology. [Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 108-111.] Yet Gunton's critique of Barth's heavily Christological view of election better accounts for the confusion which has arisen over human freedom in Barth's work.

¹⁸ CD II.2.311. In this passage, Barth is showing a contrast between the leader who rises through the ranks and becomes elevated over them as an absolute usurper in relation to other individuals. Yet this passage still seems to project some totalitarian understanding of rule upon God.

¹⁹ John Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 107 and 109. Webster argues, "To exist as a moral being is to exist in a given shape, to act *within certain limits*. Those limits are not a set of arbitrarily imposed *barriers*, closing off what are, in fact, genuine human possibilities. Rather, they are the *form* within which and as which the human moral agent may exist, and outside which it is not meaningful to speak of good human conduct at all. Being a human moral agent means existing in this way, not as a hindrance to liberty, but as the shape in which human life is itself." *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*, 55.

²⁰ CD.II.2.586.

²¹ Daphne Hampson provided an example of a Kantian approach to freedom as autonomy in "On *Autonomy and Heteronomy*" in *Swallowing a Fishbone*, edited by Hampson, (London: SPCK, 1996), 9-12. See also Charles Taylor's definition of freedom as "something men win through to by setting aside obstacles or breaking loose from external impediments, ties or entanglements." He affirmed of Hegel's notion of authentic freedom, "To be free is to be untrammelled, to depend in one's action only on oneself." *Hegel and Modern Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 155.

humans had no choice in the matter. Second, Barth rejected the autonomy of human response to God. Humans did not choose to become the people of God by living up to his standard as deduced from nature or by reason or even in His law.²² On the contrary, God elected his people and gave them his command by which they might live as his covenant people. Only in the freedom of this election does the human become free.

Third, while God elects himself to rule humankind, the individual may respond in faith and obedience, as the one who will live as elect (on the basis of the truth of her existence) or she may respond as one who is reprobate (thus living on the basis of a lie).²³ In other words, God's command does not approach the autonomous and free individual with a choice to obey or disobey. Apart from Christ, the human *does not have* freedom or individuality. Only through God's election in Jesus Christ, who received the punishment for human sin and graciously gave humans freedom, does the individual become truly free to obey. Thus, because the command of God is also the grace of God (indicative of the election of God), the command of God sets humans free, liberating the human from unfaithfulness and evil and binding him to the person of Jesus Christ.²⁴

Election and Justice

What are the implications of God's election and command for notions of political and economic justice? First, Jesus Christ forms the starting point for all ethics for "there is no good which is not obedience to God's command. And there is no obedience to God's command which is not the obedience of Jesus Christ."²⁵ Because God has chosen himself to be our God, all of human life and behaviour, including political and economic behaviour, come under his Lordship. Second, the election of God in Jesus Christ forms the starting point for defining notions of societal justice. The doctrine of election undergirds every facet of commitment to that which is other than

²² I include 'his law' here because humans proved incapable of attaining God's command in the law as will be discussed in CD IV.

²³ McCormack, 459.

²⁴ CD.II.2.586 & 630.

²⁵ CD II.2.541. Bromiley summarises Barth's assertion, "He concedes that thanks to God's patience and wisdom and man's inconsistency the good may in fact be known and done, at least in part, by non-Christians. Yet this forms no basis for an independent ethics. In principle this knowing and doing of the good is right only in so far as it is Christian. It will always need to be corrected by Christian ethics. Scientifically, then, theological ethics is the only ethics." *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 101.

God.²⁶ As Alan Torrance explained, "to confess the Lordship of Christ over all areas of life (intellectual and cultural, ecclesial and civil) means that, in the light of the Gospel, we are unconditionally obliged to be true and obedient to the One who is in her person God's Word to humankind. Culture, therefore, may neither determine the sphere of the Gospel nor relativise its imperatives but, conversely, culture and society require to be perceived, interpreted and evaluated critically in the light of the Gospel."²⁷ Therefore, human action in the political and economic spheres must be critiqued and formed by the gospel of grace.

This belief has implications for both non-Christian and Christian ethics. For ethics that begin independently of God's revelation in Christ, notions of justice will always be inadequate and often detrimental to political and economic relations. In Christian ethics, the Lordship of Christ must prevent any claims of divine sanction for universal principles of justice deduced from scripture or for worldviews based upon nature or reason. Rather, as the elected God, Christ reshapes human understanding and approaches to divine justice through his being and command.²⁸

In conclusion, the criterion for human ethics is revealed and established in the covenant that God established with humanity in Jesus Christ through election and command. The problem of human ethics and the problem of measuring good behaviour are solved in the doctrine of the command of God because the command of God is the form of His electing grace.²⁹ The command and Christ's obedience to the command thus becomes the starting point for assessing social justice as well as the origin of human just behaviour.

The Theological Foundation for Barth's Special Ethics

In his *Doctrine of Creation* and his subsequent works, Barth turned in his ethical investigation from 'general ethics' to what he called 'special ethics.' Whereas general ethics looks first at divine action—God's election and command—which effects good human action, special ethics looks downwards to the human who acts

²⁶ For this reason, Barth condemns any appeal to orders of creation which stand apart from election.

²⁷ Alan Torrance, "Introductory Essay," in *Christ, Justice, and Peace* by Eberhard Jüngel, trans. D. Bruce Hamill and Alan Torrance, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1992), xii.

²⁸ Torrance, "Introductory Essay," ix. Section three of this chapter will explore Barth's anthropology and the implication of Christ for the ontological construct of personal being in relation to neighbour.

²⁹ CD II.2.519.

under the command of God the Creator, the Reconciler, and the Redeemer.³⁰ Like his general ethics, Barth's special ethics are vitally connected to his theology. This section will expound this vital connection between ethics and theology by exploring the methodology that formed Barth's special ethics.

Three Erroneous Methods

Barth opposed three common methods for deriving human ethics that severed ethics from theology. He first condemned *casuistry* which understands the command of God as a prescribed text, "made up of biblical texts in which there are believed to be seen universally binding divine ordinances and directions, of certain propositions again presumed to be universally valid, of the natural moral law generally perceptible to human reason, and finally of particular norms which have been handed down historically in the tradition of Western Christianity and which lay claim to universal validity."³¹ Essentially, God's command is regarded as a legal text known to the ethical teacher, expounded and applied to individual cases, instructing others what is to be chosen as good or rejected as evil. He opposed this approach for three reasons:

- a. The moralist wishes to become the commander of God's will, wishing to set himself in God's place and distinguish good from evil and making himself lord, king, and judge in God's place.
- b. This approach assumes that the command of God is a universal rule. Barth wrote, "Casuistry thinks it can and must abstract from the Bible a collection of general moral rules which it is then the task of ethics to expound and apply in particular."³² The commands, Barth insists, are specific directions that concern the behaviours and deeds of humans in particular historical contexts and cannot be divorced from the concrete situations which they addressed.
- c. The moralist destroys Christian freedom by replacing God's free gracious relationship of father to his child with a universal moral principle. The human's action under God is not to decide what is the command; God's

³⁰ CD III.4.4-5.

³¹ CD III.4.6. Barth claims that this approach arose at the time of the transition from the 1st to the 2nd century "when there developed a lack of confidence in the Spirit (who is the Lord) as Guide, Lawgiver, and Judge." CD III.4.7.

³² CD III.4.12.

commandment leaves no room for application or interpretation—it leaves only room for obedience or disobedience.³³

Secondly, Barth opposed an ethical methodology based upon *natural law*, as exemplified by Emil Brunner. Though Barth appreciated Brunner's rejection of casuistry, he opposed Brunner's ethical method for its appeal to natural law as a basis for just behaviour in society. Barth objected to Brunner's conception of "divine orders," i.e. the orders of society established in creation. Brunner defined these orders of creation as "those existing facts of human corporate life which lie at the root of all historical life as unalterable presuppositions, which although their historical forms may vary, are unalterable in their fundamental structure, and at the same time, relate and unite men to one another in a definite way."³⁴ Though Brunner rejected the universal ethical guidelines of the moralist, he favoured presuppositions and structures in nature that created a basis for ethics. Rejecting any foundation apart from Jesus Christ, Barth repudiated Brunner's divine orders, his notions of earthly and human justice in family, industry, and state, for their basis in natural law.³⁵

If Barth opposed ethics which are founded in God's universal moral principles and those ethics which find their source in the laws of nature which unite men and women, does he expect the Christian to be *guided by the Spirit* hour by hour? This approach Barth also rejected because the command of God is not a "disconnected multiplicity of individual demands, claims, directions and prohibitions, but a single and unitary command which moves the divine plan of history toward completion."³⁶

Barth's Analogical Method

Rather than taking one of these three approaches to ethics, Barth introduced his ethics by reminding his reader of the theological ground for special ethics. In Jesus Christ, God encountered human persons through the Word, making himself known as Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer. Thus, the command of God will always be characterised by this divine action and manner. Barth writes, "The One who commands is the One who as Father is sovereign Lord of His creature, who in his Son has given

³³ CD III.4.13-15.

³⁴ Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1937), 210.

³⁵ Barth sought to expose Brunner's dichotomy between the justice to be apprehended from natural law and the command of God for individual ethics. CD III.4.21.

³⁶ CD III.4.17.

Himself for it, and who as Spirit will lead it into all truth and thus perfect it."³⁷ On the other side, the human is the creature of God, the one determined as God's covenant-partner and for participation in His eternal life.

According to Barth, the task of ethics is "to accompany this history of God and man from creation to reconciliation and redemption, indicating the mystery of the encounter at each point on the path according to its own distinctive character."³⁸ The encounter between God and the human involves God's gracious commandment and the human's response of obedience or disobedience. Thus, ethics must recognise its limits by leaving the final judgement to God, not seeking to provide 'God's' answer to concrete situations but attempting only to offer guidance as indicated by the Word's revelation of divine command and corresponding human action.³⁹

Barth offers this guidance in his theological ethics, particularly with regard to political ethics, through what he calls *analogy*.⁴⁰ Barth defines analogy as "a correspondence, a parallel in the creaturely world, to the plan and purpose and work and attitude of God."⁴¹ He used the idea of analogy to provide a means for speaking about God's action in the political sphere. Analogy, which allows a person to speak decisively about something which cannot be fully known, enabled Barth to speak of the Kingdom of God with reference to human kingdoms. With God's revelation in Christ as the starting point, Barth sought to understand the human world by analogy to what is known in Christ.⁴² He aimed to discern the workings of God in the world and in the governing powers based upon his faith in Christ's Lordship and the coming of God's Kingdom.⁴³

For example in the use of analogy for political ethics, Barth wrote that the state must be seen "as an allegory, as a correspondence and an analogue to the Kingdom of

³⁷ CD III.4.25.

³⁸ CD III.26.

³⁹ CD III.4.31.

⁴⁰ Although Barth does not present this analogical method in the Doctrine of Creation I have chosen to present it here because it offers insight into the approach Barth takes in his theological ethics in this volume. Barth first articulated this message in "The Christian Community and the Civil Community" written five years prior to this volume in *Community, Church, and State*, (Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1968), 169-191.

⁴¹ CD IV.2.166.

⁴² Robin W. Lovin, *Christian Faith and Public Choices*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 33-34. Lovin questions the basis for *analogia fides*, favouring *analogia entis* as the starting point for knowledge.

⁴³ Lovin, 38.

God which the Church preaches and believes in."⁴⁴ Political action is guided by the following criterion: "Among the political possibilities open at any particular moment, it [the church] will choose those which most suggest a correspondence to, an analogy and a reflection of, the content of its own faith and gospel."⁴⁵ Following discernment, he sought to prayerfully assess alternatives and make specific political decisions.⁴⁶ Although these decisions may be comparable to a non-Christian's conclusion, the Christian decision is distinct because it takes place "before the God who speaks to the world, to the Christian community and therefore to the individual Christian, in the gospel of Jesus Christ."⁴⁷

The criticism by Emil Brunner and Helmut Thielicke that Barth's analogical method could be used to defend a variety of practices fails to recognise Barth's integral connection between theology and ethics.⁴⁸ Robert Willis, in his study *The Ethics of Karl Barth*, argues that one is not free to derive any or every possibility by analogy. Rather, the overall direction or movement in which the human person is placed by the action of God in Christ acts as a limit. Willis explains, "In the event of reconciliation, man is restored to his original and proper place as the covenant partner of God, and is set on the way to authentic co-humanity and fellowship all men and women. The only legitimate use of analogy, therefore, will be in providing suggestions as to the consequences this might carry for an ordering of man's common life within the political order."⁴⁹ Barth's theology of God the Creator, the Reconciler, and the

⁴⁴ Barth, *Against the Stream*, 32.

⁴⁵ Barth, *CCCC*, 154.

⁴⁶ Barth, "Political Decisions in the Unity of Faith" in *Against the Stream*, Stanley Godman, trans., (London: SCM Press, 1954), 152 and 159.

⁴⁷ *Against the Stream*, 152. In "Christian Community and Civil Community," Barth acknowledges that his decisions remind one of Rousseau. He explains, "If our results really did coincide with theses based on natural law, it would merely confirm that the *polis* is in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ even when its officeholders are not aware of the fact or refuse to admit it." *CCCC*, 181.

⁴⁸ Helmut Thielicke, *Theologische Ethik, Band I*, (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1951-1958), 411-413; Brunner wrote, "anything and everything can be derived from the same principle of analogy: a monarchy just as well as a republic (Christ the King), a totalitarian state just as much as a state with civil liberties (Christ the Lord of all, man a servant, indeed a slave, of Jesus Christ)." Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption. Dogmatics, Vol. II*. Translated by Olive Wyon, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), 319. See also Will Herberg's introduction to *Community, State, and Church* where he calls Barth's method "most arbitrary." He writes, "The objections to the Barthian teaching on analogy are so obvious and so compelling that we are hard put to it to understand why Barth himself has not seen them from the very start." (Herberg, 35). For more discussion on the recent critique and a defence of Barth's doctrine of analogy, see R.K. Aboagye-Mensah, *Social-Political Thinking of Karl Barth*, (PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1984), 102-123.

⁴⁹ Willis, 402.

Redeemer provides the limitation and the basis for his analogical method. The following section will demonstrate the manner in which Barth's *Doctrine of Creation* forms his social ethics. Having explored Barth's analogical method, we will examine his use of the analogy of relation as it shapes Barth's anthropological assumptions and as it provides a foundation for his social ethics.

The Criterion for Social Justice in Creation: Real Humanity

Creation is the context in which God's election and command transpires. Barth called creation the external basis of the covenant because creation prepares and establishes the sphere in which the institution and history of the covenant can take place.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the covenant is the internal basis of creation, for "the wisdom and omnipotence of God the Creator was not just any wisdom and omnipotence but that of His free love. Hence what God has created was not just any reality—however perfect or wonderful—but that which intrinsically determined as the exponent of his glory and for the corresponding service."⁵¹ In this intricate relationship between creation and covenant, we understand God as Creator and Lord over all, freely loving his creation through his covenant.

God the Creator

Barth's discussion of the relationship of creation and covenant formed the means by which he founded his study of creation upon the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. According to Barth, creation is the external basis of the covenant and the covenant is the internal basis of creation. He called creation the external basis because creation prepares and establishes the sphere in which the institution and history of the covenant can take place.⁵² The covenant is the internal basis of creation, for "the wisdom and omnipotence of God the Creator was not just any wisdom and omnipotence but that of His free love. Hence what God has created was not just any reality—however perfect or wonderful—but that which intrinsically determined as the exponent of his glory and for the corresponding service."⁵³ In this intricate relationship

⁵⁰ CD III.1.97.

⁵¹ CD III.1.231.

⁵² CD III.1.97.

⁵³ CD III.1.231.

between creation and covenant, we understand God as Creator and Lord over all, freely loving his creation through his covenant.

Barth next described the human being as the creature of God and his determination as covenant-partner with God in Christ. The Creator relates to his creature as a sovereign and loving Lord who exercises providence toward his creation in accomplishing his will and covenant in Jesus Christ.⁵⁴ God fulfils his providential ordering, or his fatherly Lordship, over his creature by *preserving*, *accompanying*, and *ruling* the course of its earthly existence. He *preserves* the creature by upholding and sustaining its individual existence for covenant in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, he *accompanies* the creature. Barth writes, "Every moment of its activity and existence the creature has need of a momentary preservation. And the face that God does preserve the creature means already that He goes with it."⁵⁵ Thus God's activity accompanies and surrounds the creature with his presence as Lord, ruling over the creature in a way that gives freedom and maintains the autonomy of the creature in relation to Creator.⁵⁶ The activity of the creature is preceded by God, God joins with, and God follows the creature's activity, helping to bring it to effect.

The final aspect of God's fatherly Lordship consists in his divine *ruling*. Barth listed the components of this ruling: God orders events as the King of Israel, controls and directs events in the freedom of his grace, co-ordinates creatures and events into a community, and moves creation towards a common goal. This doctrine of God the Creator paints the backdrop for Barth's exploration of the human creature and the significance of Barth's anthropology for his social ethics.

⁵⁴ CD III.3.3.

⁵⁵ CD III.3.91.

⁵⁶ CD III.3.92. With regard to the earlier question regarding human freedom, Barth uses this point to expose a sort of synergism or participation. God "affirms and approves and recognises the autonomous actuality and therefore the autonomous activity of the creature as such. He does not play the part of tyrant towards it." Gunton explains, "We do not have to do here with 'things' that interact as part of some automatic cosmic machinery, but with a gracious and personal divine accompanying of the creature." God's person, ruling by his Word and Spirit confirms and establishes the freedom of the human creature. Gunton argues that those who reject this accompanying as an aspect of human freedom do so because their presuppositions are deist or Pelagian. They either suppose an impersonal bond between God and man or none at all. Gunton wrote, "Such positions, however, are not so much criticisms of Barth as root and branch rejections of his view that human autonomy is given by God and remains only so long as God continues to be its support." Gunton, "The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature," in *Karl Barth*, S.W. Sykes, ed., 56-57.

Christ the Criterion for Real Humanity

Barth believed that *Jesus Christ provides the criterion for social justice in creation because Christ determines real humanity*. Rather than starting with a universal understanding of humanity and moving toward the particulars of social ethics, Barth began with the particular human Jesus Christ to determine true humanity, which is being-in-encounter with God and humanity. This section will explore the true humanity of Christ and the implications for social ethics.

Christ the Real Human

Barth argued that humanity may be known only in the particular person of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ He critiqued speculative theories of human beings for their over-confident presupposition that one can know oneself without the revelation of God. Such theories lead to human self-exaltation and to the destruction of human freedom by man's absolute subjectivity.⁵⁸ Barth also contended that a scientific approach such as naturalism, while it can be helpful for speaking about humanity, ultimately deals only with the sum of specific and partial phenomena rather than the being of humanity.⁵⁹

Not even the revelation of God in the Old Testament shows us true humanity. For it discloses "man as a betrayer of himself and a sinner against his creaturely existence."⁶⁰ This radical depravity of humanity hides the true nature of the person and the light of God's revelation enables humans to understand their self-contradiction. Revelation also reminds men and women that they are objects of divine grace, partners in the covenant, and creatures of God.⁶¹ Yet the revelation about humanity in scripture does not reveal humanity without sin, except in the vicarious humanity of Jesus Christ. To understand authentic humanity, Barth argues, we must begin with the human personhood of Jesus Christ.⁶²

⁵⁷ He wrote, "In its [theological anthropology's] investigation of the nature of man in general, it must first look away from man in general to concentrate on the one man Jesus, and only then look back from Him to man in general." CD III.2.53.

⁵⁸ Barth critiques Fichte's anthropology which culminates in a doctrine of autonomy, CD III.2.106-9.

⁵⁹ CD III.2.22-24 and 80-87. Barth also critiqued existentialism and theological anthropology but we will leave the details of this discussion to our final chapter in dialogue with John Paul's anthropology.

⁶⁰ CD III.2.26.

⁶¹ CD III.2.31-32.

⁶² CD III.2.132. Barth acknowledges the manner in which Christ is not like real humanity by nature of his divinity and his unique relation to God, which will never exist between God and the human. "he alone is the Son of Man and the Son of God. Our fellowship with God rests upon the fact that He and He

Such a declaration immediately raises the question of the relation of Christ's humanity with his divinity. If Jesus is also God, which aspects of Christ exhibit the humanity that is similar to our humanity? Which are the human characteristics and which are the divine characteristics of Christ? These classic questions of Christian theology begin with the assumption of a 'general *humanum*' into which Jesus fits and the highest qualities of which Jesus models. The radical implications of Barth's starting point are manifest precisely at this point. Christ does not share in our humanity or take on the characteristics of a universal humanity in addition to his divinity. Rather, He is the one in whose humanity we share. Barth writes:

It is not the case, however, that He must partake of humanity. On the contrary, humanity must partake of Him. It is not the case, then, that He is subject to these specific determinations and features of humanity. It is not that he is conditioned and limited by them, but in so far as humanity is His it is He who transcends and therefore limits and conditions these features and determinations. As the nature of Jesus, human nature with all its possibilities is not a presupposition which is valid for Him too and controls and explains Him, but His being as a man is as such that which posits and therefore reveals and explains human nature with all its possibilities.⁶³

What then does Christ reveal about human nature? Christ reveals that real humanity finds its basis in relationship with the divine.⁶⁴ Bromiley summarises, "Real man is to be seen as conditioned by his relation to God, his deliverance by God, his determination to God's glory, his standing under God's lordship, his being in history and freedom, and his service of God and being for him."⁶⁵

Real humanity is being-with-God. He is man elected and summoned by God. According to Barth, to see the human as "summoned"⁶⁶ is to understand human nature in its entirety. "Who am I really?" Barth asks, "If I understand myself in the light of God or His Word, then I must answer that I am summoned by this Word, and to that

alone is one with God." In the following chapter, I will argue that this very dissimilarity makes possible Christ's vicarious humanity that frees humanity from the sin that separates us from right relationship with God. Through his vicarious humanity, Christ restores humanity to fellowship with God. In this manner, the divinity of Christ restores real humanity.

⁶³ CD III.2.59. Webster substantiates my assumption here that the decisions that Barth makes in his anthropology regarding the prioritising of the humanity of Christ in defining human nature and action has profound implication for his later ethics. *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*, 61-66.

⁶⁴ CD III.2.66.

⁶⁵ Bromiley, 125. Summary of CD III.2.73-75.

⁶⁶ He defines summoned: "to be heard, to have been awakened, to have to arouse oneself, to be claimed." Bromiley, 150.

extent I am in this Word. And the same answer is equally true of others. They are men, and may be addressed and seriously regarded as such, because primarily and fundamentally they are summoned by this Word. This is a universal truth."⁶⁷ In this manner, Barth draws out of Christ the elected one the implications for general humanity as elected and characterised at the root of their nature as claimed by the divine address.

He contrasts this view with Brunner's anthropology in which the very essence of humanity is "freedom as rationality and responsibility, and therefore as personality, historicity and capacity for decision."⁶⁸ Barth rejects anthropology that characterises human being as "potentiality" with a neutral capacity for choosing in loyalty or disloyalty to God. Rather, Barth argues that "if man has his being in the Word of God, he can do only that which corresponds to the Word of God. The actuality in which he has his being is from the very first orientated in that direction. It is the actuality of man caught up in the act of divine revelation and human obedience."⁶⁹ In other words, the anthropology which appeals to humanity as potentiality or human freedom as a neutral capacity fails to refer to the ontic basis of humanity but appeals only to a formal disposition in which the being of humanity has not yet been positively characterised or orientated. Barth argues that grounding humanity in the loving election of God means that the human finds her being in the covenant; she is newly characterised by the divine address of God; in Christ humanity has been transformed at an ontological level as being-with-God.⁷⁰

If humanity is indeed characterised at the ontological level by this divine address, then why do humans turn away from God? Why do they sin? By grounding humanity in the election of God, Barth claimed that sin is for the human person "an ontological impossibility."⁷¹ The human was not created with a neutral capacity to choose good or evil. The human person was created for relationship with God and obedience to him. The person does not decide against God because the possibility has been rooted in his nature. "On the contrary," Barth wrote, "when [man] chooses evil he

⁶⁷ *CD* III.2.150.

⁶⁸ Brunner's anthropology, his description of human freedom and capacity is strikingly similar to John Paul's. *CD* III.2.128.

⁶⁹ *CD* III.2.131.

⁷⁰ *CD* III.2.131-2.

⁷¹ *CD* III.2.146.

grasps that which is made impossible for him and from which he is preserved."⁷² Thus, there is no excuse for sin and the human can be re-made righteous not by his own choice but by that state of right which God alone can effect through his divine forgiveness. Humanity was created for relationship with God, not with a neutral capacity for good and evil. This creation, election, and summoning by God characterises that which is the very core of humanity. Turning against this core can only be conceived as an impossible possibility.

When he sins, the human contradicts himself. Yet even when he sins he can deny and conceal but he cannot remove or destroy the fact that he is oriented to be the covenant partner with God. "He cannot escape God, or lose his being as the creature of God, or the nature of his being. He can trifle with the grace of God, but he cannot make himself wholly unworthy to be in covenant with God. He does this too. But he is found and rescued by the free and totally undeserved grace of God."⁷³ By the faithfulness and grace of God to humanity, then, all humans are determined as covenant-partners to God, even when they refuse to acknowledge this reality.⁷⁴

Real Humanity Ontologically Relational

Barth argues that the image of God in humanity means that real humans are relational as the core aspect of their being. The image of God in Christ does not indicate direct identity with the essence that exists between God and God (i.e. between the Father, the Son and the Spirit.) Rather, the *imago* indicates correspondence and similarity.⁷⁵ In Jesus Christ the connection between God and humanity is realised in an *analogia relationis*, an analogy of the relation between the Father and the Son in the relationship between God and humanity. In other words, the similarity of the two relationships exists in the love that the Son and the Father have for one another. This love is addressed to the human by God. "Hence the factuality, the material necessity of the being of the man Jesus for his fellows, does not really rest on the mystery of an accident or caprice, but on the mystery of the purpose and meaning of God, who can maintain and demonstrate His essence even in His work, and in His relation to this

⁷² CD III.2.147.

⁷³ CD III.2.319.

⁷⁴ CD III.2.318-20.

⁷⁵ CD III.2.119.

work."⁷⁶ Thus, the *imago Dei* in Jesus Christ consists in the fact that, as he is for God, He is also for his fellow-humans.⁷⁷

In describing what the *imago Dei* consists in, the conception of similarity as an *analogia relationis* contrasts with the *analogia entis*. Barth argues that the being of God cannot be compared with the being of humans because he rejected the concept that the *imago Dei* could reside in an individual without regard to the relation to others.⁷⁸ In the same way that God is relational in his very essence, the *imago Dei* in Christ entails ontological relationality between God and humanity as an analogue of that relation of love which exists between Father, Son and Spirit.⁷⁹ For God created the human "in His own image in the fact that he did not create him alone but in this connection and fellowship. For in God's action as the Lord of the covenant, and even further back in His action as the Creator of a reality distinct from Himself, it is proved that God Himself is not solitary, that although he is one in essence He is not alone, but that primarily and properly He is in connection and fellowship."⁸⁰ Likewise, in his image, the human is created-with-God as man and woman-with-others.⁸¹ Barth located human relation, therefore, in the very essence of human ontology.⁸²

Real Humanity as Neighbour

Barth argues that the *analogia relationis* means that as humans are covenant partners with God by nature, they are also neighbours with one another by nature. He argues this based upon the humanity of Christ. Whereas Christ's divinity means that he is the human person for God, his humanity means that he is a creature among others. What interests Jesus exclusively is the humans who need him, the humans who are the objects of his saving work. He is sent and ordained by God to deliver his fellow-

⁷⁶ CD III.2.220.

⁷⁷ CD III.2.222.

⁷⁸ CD III.2.220.

⁷⁹ CD III.2.323-4. Cf. Ray Anderson, *On Being Human*, (Pasadena: Fuller Seminary Press, 1982), 75-76.

⁸⁰ CD III.2.324.

⁸¹ CD III.2.243.

⁸² The final chapter will draw out a contrast between Barth's ontology of relation and John Paul's *analogia entis*, arguing that John Paul's social ethics is problematic because it is fundamentally individualistic. For John Paul, human ontology is relational only by potential, not in material reality.

humans.⁸³ Christ's work reveals that he is ontologically the Neighbour and Saviour of humans.⁸⁴ Like John Paul, Barth described Christ as gift. He gave of himself in fulfilment of the task given him by God.⁸⁵ His humanity is characterised by being the Human for other humans.

Our corresponding being is being in encounter with other human persons.⁸⁶ Barth ruled out anthropologies such as Nietzsche's which bracketed out fellow-humanity by seeking to understand the human as individual. Barth argued that such isolation is inhumanity.⁸⁷ Humanity means encounter with other humans in which humans look one another in the eye, speak and listen to one another, render mutual assistance, and exist with others in gladness.⁸⁸ As the human for fellow-humans, then, Jesus Christ provides the criterion for social justice by determining humanity as fellow-humanity.⁸⁹

Real Humanity as the Criterion for Justice

This Christological anthropology forms Barth's social ethics. As God calls a person to Himself, as He summons that person to serve Him, He addresses the person concerning his or her vocation to be a covenant-partner with Himself and he directs the person to his fellow-human. He calls men and women to fulfil their being through encounter with another, to allow his humanity as fellow-humanity to be his nature. Thus God calls the human person into freedom in fellowship with others. In this manner, the divine command is the invitation to real humanity. Barth explained, "Humanity, the characteristic and essential mode of man's being, is in its root fellow-humanity. Humanity that is not fellow-humanity is inhumanity. For it cannot reflect but only contradict the determination of man to be God's covenant partner."⁹⁰ As the image

⁸³ CD III.2.208-209.

⁸⁴ CD III.2.133 and 210.

⁸⁵ CD III.2.217.

⁸⁶ CD III.2.320.

⁸⁷ CD III.2.251.

⁸⁸ CD III.2.250-271.

⁸⁹ In this section and the following I am indebted to Ray Anderson's article that links Barth's concept of neighbour with his political ethics. "The Concept of Neighbour in the Ethics of Karl Barth," in *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry With Theological Praxis*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001), 132-160.

⁹⁰ CD III.4.117.

of *Deus triunus*, men and women are created for fellowship. Thus, people find freedom in this summons by God to fellowship with others.

Humanity as the Criterion for Political Relations

This summons to fellowship means that, in the political realm, humans are commanded to live in the reality of their relation as neighbour to both those who are near and to those who are far. Those who are near share a common language, geographical location, and history. While God's command does not remove these boundaries, it overcomes the barriers between those who cannot relate in this manner because it wills that the human should move out from his beginning place and seek a wider field.⁹¹ In addition, the fact that the covenant of God has been extended to all humans in Christ means that while the human belongs wholly to his people, God also belongs to humanity. "As he holds his near neighbours with the one hand, he reaches out to the distant with the other."⁹² Barth argued this point against the idolatrous nationalism of which he had witnessed in Germany and which exalted one ethnicity over against another.

Barth's exegesis of Genesis 11-12 potently describes the purpose of nations and the implications of God's covenant for international relations. Nations were not an order of creation, he contended, but an act of God's gracious preservation for humanity. He argued that according to Genesis 11:1-9 a single race came to build a tower with intention of exalting itself and becoming its own Lord—making itself equal with God on the basis of its work. God came and, knowing that a sinful race in unity could cause great evil, he judged their arrogance by taking away their gift of unity, giving them many languages, and dispersing them throughout the earth. Barth concluded that this act of the Creator was an act of Preservation for his creation, instituted to preserve the continuance of the world. On the one hand, the Christian gives thanks to God for preserving Creation for the covenant. On the other hand, a homesickness is evoked by this separation of people into neighbours near and far. Thus, the person remains loyal to their nation or near neighbours while maintaining an openness to far neighbours.

Where does one's loyalty then lie? Does the Christian continue to swing back and forth between national and international allegiance? Barth continued his exegesis in

⁹¹ CD III.4.292.

⁹² CD III.4.298.

Genesis 12, pointing out that one nation was chosen from among all of the nations to be called the people of God. Through this nation, Christ came to offer salvation to all nations. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit manifested this universal offer of salvation by giving the peoples one language and making them one in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:13ff). Because of Christ, the loyalty of the believer in the Creator God no longer entails loyalty to a particular nation. The loyalty of the believer belongs first and foremost to Jesus Christ as the head of the new *polis*, the Kingdom of God.⁹³ Because God's light now shines among all the nations, humanity also moves outward in loyalty to God and in love, gift, and service to humanity.⁹⁴

Human Respect as the Criterion for Life

Whereas the language of human rights is normally employed in defence of human life, Barth approaches the discussion from an entirely different angle. Over against the assumption that intrinsic to human nature are certain rights which must be discerned and defended, Barth argues that human life is on loan from God and must be respected.⁹⁵ Human life is not a right but a loan from God. The human is not intrinsically endowed with the right to live. Rather, the human is commanded to live by the Creator God who gave him life. This radically different understanding of human life exposes the selfish ambition, which can so easily lace human rights. Language of human rights can conceal actions that destruct the life of another. For example, the fight for women's rights went awry when it obliterated appropriate respect for the life of

⁹³ CD III, 4, 516-17. Further implications of this encounter of the Kingdom of God with the state will be developed in the following chapter.

⁹⁴ CD III.4.323.

⁹⁵ CD III.4.325. William James clarifies the complexity of Barth's conception of rights: "In Barth's view, 'human rights' are not rights of natural humanity as abstract principles which become embodied in the state or society as an impersonal authority. What is right is grounded in what actually is in fact the case—though this can only be known with certainty and clarity through revelation—that human beings exist for and with the other as neighbour. . . We do not have a claim to rights by virtue of nature, but by virtue of reconciliation. This means that the inherent ethical mandate is responsibility for the other. On the one level, natural rights can be viewed as 'a claim' on others, but responsibility is another way of speaking of how we treat others. This is true because reconciliation seems to be grounded not so much in a claim for rights as in a responsibility. Therefore, the concept of 'rights' is not based on ideological concepts, but on a theological anthropology developed out of an incarnational theology. . . The concept of 'right' is determined by two things: one, the command to love my neighbour as myself; and two, the right of the neighbour to be respected because God has placed the neighbour there under command as my ethical boundary." In "An Analysis Of Karl Barth's Theological Anthropology As A Basis For An Ethic Of Social Justice And Human Rights," (PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen August 1995), 18-19.

another. Such destruction led the proponents of human rights such as Hans Küng to also address human responsibilities.⁹⁶

Yet the language of human rights and responsibilities places human life solely in the hands of human persons and fails to acknowledge the vital connection between humanity its creator. It deifies human reason and behaviour because it takes a moralistic approach to ethics.⁹⁷ It assumes that freedom depends upon the right of the individual. In contrast, Barth argues that God's command to treat one's own life and the life of other as a loan creates freedom for the individual in community. As a loan, a human's life is not under his control or claim but it is for the service of God in which true freedom is found.⁹⁸

How does "respect for life" limit human forms of destruction with which human rights language can be laced? Barth explained:

What matters is not something but someone, the real man before God and among his fellows, his individual psycho-physical existence, his movement in time, his freedom his orientation on God and solidarity with others. What matter is that everyone should treat his existence and that of every other human being with respect. For it belongs to God. It is His loan and his blessing. And it may be seen to be this in the fact that God Himself has so unequivocally and completely acknowledged it in Jesus Christ.⁹⁹

This recollection that real human life is lived in orientation on God and co-ordination with others safeguards against the constant threat of egoism. Respect for life does not consist in a rigid principle or rule, or in an absolute will to live. Rather, it consists in a will to live which by God's command or decree may be weakened, broken, or destroyed. But if so, it will be such with the hope of eternal life.¹⁰⁰ Thus, respect for one's own life must always stand under the command of God and it cannot become grounds for the destruction of another.

⁹⁶ Küng, Hans. *A Global Ethic for Politics and Economics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65-66 and 223-224.

⁹⁷ See earlier section of this chapter, "Three Erroneous Methods."

⁹⁸ CD III.4.327.

⁹⁹ CD III.4.340.

¹⁰⁰ CD III.4.342.

Humanity as the Criterion for Work

Barth also applies the criterion of fellow-humanity to the economic sphere in his discussion of human work. Human work corresponds to providential rule and its meaning is found in man's affirmation of his existence as a human creature.¹⁰¹ Thus human work is faithfulness to God's creation through the "prolongation of life in the form of striving in which man sets himself certain ends and does his best to attain them."¹⁰² Good work is aimed to promote the needed universal and individual conditions of human existence.¹⁰³ According to Barth, work must be assessed by the question whether and to what extent it is human:

The criterion of humanity! Here at least it is surely clear to us that there is a great gulf between the command of God and our observance of it, that even in our best activity we are perverted men in a perverted world. Human work can and should take place in co-existence and co-operation. But in reality it does so in isolation and mutual opposition. It should provide each of us with our daily bread in peace, offering us an opportunity for the development of our particular abilities and the corresponding accomplishments, and thus liberating us for the service which provides the real meaning of our lives.¹⁰⁴

With respect to the social character of work, Barth warned of a two-fold thoughtlessness. First, the thoughtless opinion that a human person can work for himself without working in fellowship with others, without making room for their work and for the earning of their livelihood, leads humans into inhuman work. Barth wrote, "Without his fellows, man is not man at all but only a shade of man. If he seeks to earn his bread and therefore to work in abstract isolation, his existence is that of this shade."¹⁰⁵ A second problem that dehumanises work is the lust for possessions, "the lust for a superabundance which is not the natural and beautiful abundance of life but the overflow of nothingness."¹⁰⁶ Work for genuine and vital claims can maintain the

¹⁰¹ Barth explained, "It is established by divine providence. Irrespective of whether it is recognised and acknowledged by us men or not, it rests on God's sovereignty over the whole world and all men has its centre and aim in the coming of His Kingdom. The objective teleology of this connection is the basis of the fact that God has created man as man, that He has ordained and equipped him for human existence, for its active affirmation and therefore for work, and that as man and as worker, whether he recognises it or not, man is already engages in preparation for the true and essential service to which God wills to call him with the coming of His Kingdom." CD III.4.524.

¹⁰² CD III.4.527.

¹⁰³ CD III.4.529.

¹⁰⁴ CD III.4.536.

¹⁰⁵ CD III.4.537.

¹⁰⁶ CD III.4.538.

character of peaceful co-operation. However, work in the service of inordinate profit transgresses the command of God and becomes the root of a great deal of evil and oppression.

Barth calls this two-fold thoughtlessness the root of inhuman work because it creates an atmosphere of competition that leads to conflict. As people greedily strive to fulfil their desires, they cannot work in co-operation and mutual self-giving but in competition against the other. Barth especially condemns the West for social injustice and oppression through the exploitation of the weaker by those who are stronger. He condemns the owners of the means of production for "earning more than they are entitled" through the labour of weaker and dependent workers.¹⁰⁷

The command of God summons humans to a counter-movement, which can ease the situation. International laws or measures may erect some justice or may establish some limits between legitimate and illegitimate competition. Organisations of labour may create more fair working conditions. The awakening of the working classes associated with Marx helped to erect effective barriers to protect the weak against the strong.

While he admitted that state socialism may become a new form of injustice, he warned Christians in the West against hypocritical condemnation of socialism. "Christianity in the West has its main work cut out to comprehend the disorder in the decisive form still current in the West, to remember and to assert the command of God in the face of this form, and to keep to the 'left' in opposition to its champions, i.e. to confess that it is fundamentally on the side of the victims of this disorder and to espouse their cause."¹⁰⁸ Yet Barth opposed the identification of the Christian message with any particular economic system. The root of the problem lies deeper than any radical attempt at reform could repair. The root lies in "a human aberration which necessarily gives rise to the exploitation of man by man in ever changing forms—so necessarily that even the most well-meaning and vigorous attempts at counter-movement can arrest and modify but not entirely remove it."¹⁰⁹

The word of God regarding social justice, which arises from the Christian community, therefore, consists in the "proclamation of the revolution of God against

¹⁰⁷ CD III.4.542.

¹⁰⁸ CD III.4.544.

¹⁰⁹ CD III.4.545.

'all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man.'"¹¹⁰ The Christian community should not identify the Kingdom of God with any particular system but should expound that system which upholds the criterion of humanity. This criterion of real humanity is determined in the personhood of Jesus Christ. Jesus reveals that real humanity is the human-with-fellow-humanity in a manner analogous to the relation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Barth's social ethics are intrinsically related to his Christian theology. The criterion of humanity which shapes Barth's interpretation of justice in political, social, and economic relations is determined by the humanity of Christ, the one elected to be the covenant partner of God. First, Christ's election determined the election of humanity for God and set humans under the command of God as covenant partners with Him. Becoming covenant partners in Christ opened to humanity the possibility for freedom in ethical behaviour through the command of God. Having opened this possibility for freedom in obedience to the command of God, Barth turned to consider the justice and injustice of specific human acts. His very methodology of determining these specific ethics rested upon the Doctrine of God as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer. In closing this chapter, we turned to explore Barth's specific ethics as they are related to his *Doctrine of Creation*. I argued that Barth's social ethics in the fields of political relations, human rights, and economic relations are derived from the criterion of humanity, which is also determined by Christ. As the covenant partner of God, Christ is also the real human person who determines true humanity as the person who is, by nature, with-fellow-humans. In conclusion, Barth guards himself against the deification of humanity that haunted the social ethics of his day by maintaining an intrinsic connection between theology and ethics. In particular, he grounded his theories of just social relations upon the real humanity of Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁰ CD III.4.545. Barth's quotation from Romans 1:18.

CHAPTER SIX

JESUS CHRIST THE GOD-HUMAN ESTABLISHES JUSTICE

The previous chapter outlined some of Barth's key concerns for human justice in the political and economic spheres, specifically with regard to ethical support for the preservation of human life and the promotion of just labour. We argued that Barth's primary criterion was "humanity"—meaning that social ethics must maintain the cause of humanity over against the injustice of inhumane behaviours and destructive political and economic systems. While this concern for humanity echoes the concern of John Paul II, Barth differentiates his criteria from humanism at a fundamental level. Rather than defining humanity according to universal notions of the human to which the ethics of Christ are then applied, Barth defined humanity by the particular person of Jesus Christ. Thus, he based his criterion of "humanity" directly in the middle of the revelation of God, surrounded and formed by theology from every side. In this manner, Barth sought to guard against establishing criteria or articulating social ethics that are based upon autonomous human ideals of justice. For, as we argued in our first chapter of Part Two, Chapter Four, Barth perceived clearly the destruction wrought by such deification of human ideals. While on the surface such aims might promote the good of society, exalted human ideals that are not formed by God's revelation potentially contain a seed of violence and inhumanity against the neighbour.

In this chapter, we will explore two questions. The first question explores *why* Barth believed that this violence and inhumanity occurs, despite the best of human intentions or the highest of human ideals. Barth perceived that the problem of social injustice was not located in the lack of knowledge concerning moral criteria. Rather, the incarnation of Christ reveals that the actuality of human sin is an ontological problem. By comparison, John Paul II who also affirms that the problem of human sin is the root of social injustice, embraces the doctrine of the *analogia entis* which maintains that the sin only inhibits the mind and the will, that grace need not sanctify

the human intentions. As a representative of the reformed tradition, Barth located the problem of social evils in the ontological effects of human sin. We will argue that Barth's doctrine of reconciliation must be read as dealing with sin as the critical problem of injustice at the level of ontology.

When Barth posed the problem in this manner, he did not merely mean that social injustice results from blatant acts of human evil against the neighbour. Rather, Barth located one of the worst potentials for injustice in the problem of human goodness. While the *analogia entis* affirms the goodness of unredeemed humanity, Barth argued that this "unredeemed goodness" is a root cause of injustice against the neighbour. The reconciliation wrought in Christ exposes the evil of pride, sloth, and untruth that lies within this seed of unredeemed goodness. In addition, this reconciliation redeems human goodness so that the quest for just society finds its way by the establishment of God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is established in Christ's reconciling work that brings humanity into unity with one another.

The second question explores a solution for social injustice. As the reader may recall, Chapter Four proposed that Barth's social ethics were shaped by his concern to oppose the deification of humanity which influenced German culture and prevented liberal theologians from taking a critical stand against the ethical abuses of Barth's day. Chapter Five explored Barth's critical criterion for justice which arose from his concern to begin anew in the theology, anthropology, and social ethics revealed by God in Jesus Christ. This chapter argues that Jesus Christ also reveals that ethical criteria alone are not sufficient to form a just society. The human must be reconciled with God and with the neighbour at an ontological level; human goodness must be redeemed through the humanity of God in Jesus Christ. Thus, we will explore Barth's claim that the reconciliation of God in Christ Jesus forms the starting point for social justice by reconciling humans with God and with one another.

Christ has enacted and revealed this reconciliation in a threefold movement in which humanity has been deeply involved. First, Christ revealed God's justice in the downward movement of incarnation through which God joined himself with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ and in which he justified humanity. Reconciliation also took place as a movement from below to above: Jesus Christ, the true human, has been exalted by God and has drawn humans to God in himself. As members of God's Kingdom, humans are ruled by justice and they are given freedom to practice justice. Third, Barth described the prophetic role of Christ as the outward movement of

speaking and acting that reveals God's reconciliation and justice to the world. In union with Christ, the church serves the world by proclaiming Christ and by caring for the world. Working from our two questions posed for Barth concerning *why* unredeemed human goodness destroys human relations and societies and *what* is the solution for creating just societies, this chapter will explore Barth's social ethics in the three movements which reconciled humanity to God and to the neighbour.

The Incarnation of Christ: The Lord as Servant

According to Barth, the downward movement of Christ reveals the sin of pride and disobedience as an ontological problem that undermines the relationship between humans and God. The injustice of humanity did not merely need to be corrected by a model, Jesus Christ, who could show humans how to live in reconciliation with God and one another. Rather, the vicarious humanity of Jesus, who is God, revealed that the establishment of just relations demanded a total conversion of humanity so that humans might be reconciled and free to obey the command of God. Barth's characterisation of sin as ontological renders a starting point for social justice in the person and work of Christ alone.¹ Without Christ, humans can neither know what is good nor can they participate in the goodness that God commands toward the neighbour.

Incarnation Reveals the Extent of the Human Dilemma

Rather than moving from the problem of sin to the solution of redemption like John Paul, Barth first explored the solution in order to adequately assess the human dilemma. The downward movement of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God, his being with humanity as a human, and his servanthood expressed in humility and obedience unto death reveals the depth of the human problem.² Barth wrote, "It was not necessary that God should become man and that the Son of God should die on the cross simply to deal with an interruption in the course of the world, simply to mitigate the relative imperfection of the human situation, or to strengthen and increase its relative perfection."³ Rather, the giving of Jesus, who is God with us, to live with humans and

¹ Cf. Christian Kettler, *The Vicarious Humanity of Christ and the Reality of Salvation*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 233-262.

² CD IV.1.157-9.

³ CD IV.1.411.

to die for humans reveals the "serious and terrible nature of human corruption."⁴ Barth wrote:

The depth of the abyss into which man is about to fall as the author of it, can be measured by the fact that the love of God could react and reply to this event only by His giving, His giving up, of Jesus Christ Himself to overcome and remove it and in that way to redeem man, fulfilling the judgement upon it in such a way that the Judge allowed Himself to overcome and remove it and in that way to redeem man, fulfilling the judgement upon it in such a way that the Judge allowed himself to be judged and caused the man of sin to be put to death in his own person.⁵

The truth of the incarnation, the fact that Jesus is God, demonstrated the serious dilemma posed by human sin.

This sin, Barth argued, is the truth of a human's entire being. Often humans want to separate their sinful behaviour from their personhood. They adopt the idea of a neutral Ego which is different from nor is it affected by its evil actions.⁶ However, Barth argued that the human's "inward being is the source of his outward actions." In other words, "Man is what he does."⁷ The fact that Jesus died totally for the reconciliation of all humans means that human corruption is "both radical and total."⁸ Barth spared no space in the human person that was not effected by sin, no seed of unredeemed human goodness.⁹ He wrote:

The Word of God—and the atoning work of Jesus Christ as the Representative of man, of the whole man—brings against man the accusation that at the very core of his being—the heart, as the Bible puts it—he is not good but evil, not upright but corrupt, not humble but proud in one or other of the forms known to us, wanting to be God and Lord and the judge of good and evil, and his own helper, and therefore hating God and his neighbour.¹⁰

Thus, Barth believed that sin has corrupted the very ontological nature of humans.

Barth did not mean by this claim that the human, through sin, acquired another human nature which is evil. The human has not ceased to be human; he has not lost his divine likeness. Barth explained, "The Bible accuses man as a sinner from head to foot,

⁴ CD IV.1.412.

⁵ CD IV.1.412.

⁶ CD IV.1.403.

⁷ CD IV.1.405.

⁸ CD IV.1.492.

⁹ See entire argument in CD IV.1.492-495.

¹⁰ CD IV.1.494-5.

but it does not dispute to man his full and unchanged humanity, his nature as God created it good, the possession and use of all the faculties which God has given him.”¹¹ For the human cannot step outside of the covenant which God made with him. Barth thought that the problem of sin is much greater than a setting aside or damaging of good human nature. Rather, “it consists in the crying contradiction that he sets himself—his being in the integrity of his human nature and his being in covenant with God—in the service of evil, and that now he has to exist in that service.”¹² By living in this contradiction, the human estranges himself from himself, his good nature is altered but not destroyed.¹³ Yet despite this “alienation and aberration and failure” by humans, God remained faithful and gracious to humanity, bringing reconciliation by justifying all of humanity in his Son.¹⁴

Barth’s exegesis of the second temptation of Christ provides an excellent illustration that Christ recognised that the problem of sin had invaded all of the human person, including the will. Christ recognised that social ills could not be solved through legislation alone, through his ethical model alone, nor by an act of autonomous human willing, no matter how good the intentions may be. In Mark 4 and Luke 4, Satan promised to give Jesus Lordship, if Christ would fall down and worship him. Barth asked, Why did Jesus not accept the Kingdom and rule it as he saw fit? Christ could have established a truly just system of politics and economics and he could have ruled justly. Yet he refused. According to Barth, Jesus did not acknowledge the authority of Satan because “He would have ceased to recognise and confess the sin of the world as sin, to take it upon Himself as such, and in His own person to bring to an issue the conflict with it (as with man’s contradiction against God and himself).”¹⁵ Because Christ recognised the problem of the world as sin, he willed the opposition to this sin by continuing to worship and serve God alone. Christ knew and acknowledged that the problem of injustice did not result from any deficiency in the rule of God over this world or merely in human ignorance of just standards. The problem of injustice lay in the hearts of humans because they have set themselves in the service of evil by denying

¹¹ *CD* IV.1.492.

¹² *CD* IV.1.493.

¹³ *CD* IV.1.406.

¹⁴ *CD* IV.1.406.

¹⁵ *CD* IV.1.262. Barth’s brief discussion of the “overlordship of evil” indicates that Christ dealt not only with the sin of the human heart but also with the evil forces with which sinful humans participate.

the covenant with God and thus denying their own nature. Only through recreating the human person as righteous would God be worshipped and served; and in the worship and service of God by re-created humanity, his justice would reign in human society.

Justice Possible Through Christ

Before turning to reflect on the significance that God's justification of humanity poses for human social justice, we will explore the implication of the specific sin of pride which characterises the problem we have called, "unredeemed human goodness." Often, people think that they can judge good and evil and can behave justly toward the neighbour without the justification of Christ. Barth argued that the humility of the incarnate Christ exposes such pride. The humility of Christ who became the Judge judged on our behalf teaches us (a) that God alone is the judge of good and evil and (b) God alone frees humans for just behaviour.

Barth opposed the assumption that autonomous humans could judge right from wrong, good from evil, or justice from injustice. He questioned the authority and competence of humanity to judge what is forbidden and wrong, based on conscience, or general reason, or tradition. He asked, "What is the basis of the accusation which gives evil its name and calls the man evil who takes this direction?"¹⁶ Jesus Christ alone is the Judge; God determines right and wrong because he alone is righteous. Humans attempt to resist or reinterpret that which is truly right. In the desire to judge good and evil, the human misunderstands herself. If she wants to make a decision between right and wrong where the judgement of God has already decided and his knowledge has discerned good from evil, she arrogantly overestimates her ability and her position. By renouncing confidence in God's judgement, she loses her freedom to stand as a witness of what God has decided. For she is free only when she "thinks and decided and acts at peace with God, when [her] decision is simply and exclusively a repetition of the divine decision."¹⁷

Barth illustrated the implications for ethics in his exegesis of Genesis 3. In this story, Eve was tempted by the serpent to become like God, knowing good and evil. "What the serpent has in mind," Barth argued, "is the establishment of ethics." The

¹⁶ CD IV.1.402.

¹⁷ CD IV.1.449.

following quote of Barth displays the radical nature of his interpretation and approach to justice:

It is surprising that in the Christian Church more offence is not taken at the fact—or have we simply read it away?—that in Gen. 3 the desire of man for a knowledge of good and evil is represented as an evil desire, indeed the one evil desire which is so characteristic and fatal for the whole race. The consequences for the theory and practice of Christian ethics—and not only that—would be incalculable if only we were to see this and accept it instead of regarding this very questionable knowledge—whether sought in the Bible or in the rational nature of man or conscience—as the most basic of all the gifts of God. The armour behind which the real evil of the pride of man conceals itself is obviously thicker and more impenetrable at this point than at any other.¹⁸

This quote reveals Barth's fundamentally different approach to ethics. He claimed that Christian ethics must begin, not with reflection, but with hearing.¹⁹ Human persons answer the question of good and right not by a philosophy or worldview or program but by thinking through what God has already thought about human activity. Christian ethics merely repeats what God has already spoken to the human about his activity.²⁰ The human has not been left to reflect upon and judge between abstract notions of good and evil. As the just Judge, God in Christ has declared justice; he has spoken his command. The human need only act accordingly.²¹

According to Barth, not only must the human rely upon God in order to know just social behaviour, the human may also find in God alone the source for just social action. Webster summarises, "The image of the self as fashioner of its own identity through its acts is, simply wicked and ruinous. 'Wicked' because it is a direct refusal of God's omnipotent grace; 'ruinous' because it thereby opposes the one true source of our well-being. Sin as pride is the hopeless

¹⁸ CD IV.1.449.

¹⁹ Barth, *God Here and Now*, 87.

²⁰ *God Here and Now*, 87. See for instance Barth's exegesis of Naboth's vineyard in Kings 21. Barth affirmed that human knowledge of right and wrong is not based upon categories of good and evil or upon human judgement of just or unjust. The knowledge of righteous behaviour issues directly from the commands of God. God has already made the ethical judgement. In attempting to assert justice which counters God's command, as Ahab did, the human finds himself an arrogant and unjust judge. CD IV.1.453-454.

²¹ *God Here and Now*, 87.

delusion that we can maintain our own cause without grace."²² Human reliance upon self results from a fundamental misunderstanding of human capabilities. Believing herself to will what is good, she wills that which is objectively evil. She desires to stand at God's side in defence of the good, preserving the world against chaos, and pretending to be strong and able. However, this very arrogance places the human on the side of evil. Barth argued, "I can only live at unity with myself, and we can only live in fellowship with one another, when I and we subject ourselves to the right which does not dwell in us and is not manifested by us, but which is over me and us as the right of God above, manifested to me and us only from God, the right of His Word and commandment alone, the sentence and judgement of His Spirit."²³ He believed that war is the inevitable consequence when the law and the commandments of God are taken out of the hands of God and placed in human hands.

Barth argued that the attitude and act of the persons surrounding Christ's crucifixion reveal that the hearts of all humans are inclined to hate God and the neighbour.²⁴ He wrote:

The religious leaders in Israel in their fanatical blindness; the people in their stupidity and vacillation; the statesman and judge with his unrighteous judgement; the women with their useless tears; the disciples with their flight; Peter with his denial; and the man who set it all in train, Judas with his treachery. Here in the light of the One to whom all this was done, who had to suffer all this, we see plainly the man of sin.²⁵

The pride of man is expressed in the fratricide of his neighbour, the brother of all humans, Jesus Christ "in whose image God has made every man, in whom as the Head of the human race every man is either honoured or despised, and is not actually despised and denied and rejected and put to death."²⁶ Thus, Barth believed that human pride leads to the exaltation of self over against the person of Christ and, by implication, over against the neighbour.

²² Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 95. His quotation is from Barth's *CD* IV.1.230. Webster explains further, "The truth about our existence is that we are 'participants in the great drama' of reconciliation rather than shapers of our own selfhood." (Webster, 96.) Yet as Webster argues, this participation does not limit human freedom in Barth's anthropology. Rather, it opens up the possibility of freedom (Webster, 223-230).

²³ *CD* IV.1.451.

²⁴ *CD* IV.1.398. From Qu. 5.

²⁵ *CD* IV.1.399.

²⁶ *CD* VI.1.399.

In summary, Barth argued that the Judge judged in our place reveals the complete inability of humans to know and to do justice apart from God's revelation in Christ. Left to their own devices, humans cannot judge justly. Rather their judgements reveal their pride, disobedience, and unbelief in God as the Judge. Nor are humans capable of any degree of just behaviour without God.²⁷ The Judge judged in our place pardons human injustice and makes humans just in Christ.

Reconciliation through Justification

Barth described this pardoning in his discussion of the doctrine of justification. According to Barth, this doctrine has a negative and a positive side. On the negative side, the justification of the human person in Jesus is the destruction of his wrong; the sin and the proud person of sin are destroyed in this justification.²⁸ On the other side, the justification of the human person in Jesus is the establishing of his right: the introducing of a new man or woman who is righteous before God. By virtue of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the person has turned from his own wrong and from himself as a doer of wrong to God as a recipient of his grace and pardon. The justified person has peace with God and neighbour and self and he lives righteously.²⁹ Justified people are gathered by the Holy Spirit to be made holy by the Holy Spirit in the Christian community.³⁰

In summary, Barth expounded the downward movement of Christ Jesus as revealing the justice of God in two ways. First, the Judge judged in our place through the cross displayed the justice of God to judge between good and evil and to reveal the inability of the human to know and to practice the good (and by implication justice) apart from God's revelation in Christ. The second revelation of God's justice is his rebirth of humanity in Christ so that humans are justified by God, humans turn to God, and humans acknowledge, witness to, and live by the justice of God's Word as a part of God's holy community.

²⁷ The question then becomes, to what degree does God enable humans to do justice in this world as a preservation of their existence?

²⁸ CD IV.1.553-4.

²⁹ CD IV.1.627.

³⁰ CD IV.1.650.

The Possibility of Human Justice

In light of this theology, what does Barth believe to be the scope of human justice? In light of Christ's revelation of justice, how does the human understand her work for justice? In the ethical portion of the doctrine of reconciliation, *The Christian Life*, Barth described the limit of human justice by contrasting it with God's justice. He argued that humans could not bring in or build up a moral or political Kingdom of God on this earth because God's justice is the affair of God's own act that has been accomplished and is still awaited in Jesus Christ. Barth explained, "The righteousness that brings life to the world can only be that of the Kingdom of God. Where people, especially Christians, practice this or introduce it, where they try to proclaim, define, and exercise a divine right instead of simply believing in the coming of God's Kingdom and praying for it, there they are enslaved to a titanism whose only result can be all kinds of greater and smaller monstrosities, wild illusions, oppressions and suppressions of all kinds, and finally witch hunts, murder, and killing."³¹ Christians may only claim to work for human righteousness; God's righteousness requires them and empowers them to work for justice. Though this just action will be related to the Kingdom of God and initiated by the righteousness of God, humans must always remember that their work will always fall short of God's work. Barth explained that Christians have been made responsible to work for righteousness:

The only point is that in spite of their situation of shared guilt and oppression they have been required and empowered to pray for the coming of the kingdom. This is what differentiates them from all other people. So too, of course, does their commitment to oppose, resist, and revolt against human corruption in their own sphere, which it is not their affair to transcend. Not led astray by necessity, they have to swim manfully against the stream regardless of the cost or consequences. They do this by looking past and beyond all other things to man, whom God loved in spite of all his corruption and misery, by making man the proper object of their interest, by making man's right and life and freedom and joy their theme. In this way they fight the fight for human righteousness against human unrighteousness.³²

Therefore, those who seek a triumphal political or economic programme in Barth's ethics of reconciliation will find themselves disappointed. Barth opposed such triumphalism by holding before his reader the human reality that Christ's downward movement revealed: both the human pride which claims to know justice and the human

³¹ CD IV.1.264.

³² CD IV.1.267.

disobedience, which seeks to rule rather than worship have been judged and deemed unjust.

The Upward Movement: The Servant as Lord

Whereas the downward movement of the God-human revealed the humility and obedience of Christ the Lord in becoming a servant, the upward movement of Christ reveals the exaltation of human essence in the Servant who becomes Lord. According to Barth, this upward movement reveals the sin of sloth and disobedience as an ontological problem that undermines the relationship between humanity and God and humanity with one another. Christ's upward movement reveals both the problem of sloth that destroys human relationality and it reveals the sanctification for humanity through which persons are freed to live justly in social relationships. As participants in the Royal Man Christ, humans discover what it is to live under his lordship in reconciled relations with the neighbour. Following a brief discussion of Christ the Royal Man, we will explore this dialectic of sin and conversion revealed in Christ's exaltation.

The Royal Man

Barth located his discussion of the Royal Man in the context of covenant and election. In the elected one, Jesus Christ, God made an eternal decision to reconcile sinful humanity to himself. The incarnation is the historical fulfilment of election, it is the "act of majesty in which the Son of God assumes human essence, and exists as the man Jesus of Nazareth, in which He unites in Himself His divine with our human and our human with his divine essence, in which He commits them to a mutual participation, in which especially He exalts our assumed human essence, i.e., to gracious fellowship with his divine nature, to the *consortium divinitatis*, and therefore, as we have seen, to a common action with His divinity."³³ In his being as a human, Christ raised up human essence so that the reconciliation of the world with God has taken place and Kingdom of God has been inaugurated on this earth.

³³ CD IV.2.37-38, 117.

The Sloth and Sanctification of Humanity in Christ

According to Barth, the exaltation of Christ reveals the sloth and the misery of humans. This sloth describes the bondage of the will seen in the human unwillingness to raise herself up to obedience. Like the downward movement of Christ that revealed human injustice, the upward movement also reveals the unwillingness of the autonomous human to obey God and, by implication, to practice love and justice toward the neighbour. Like the sin of pride, sloth is an ontological reality which affects the will of humans negatively, prohibiting them from choosing to behave justly. Again in this chapter, Barth argues against the notion that the individual is left relatively unaffected by evil action.³⁴ On the contrary, the human who sins is the human characterised by sloth and indolence, the human who wills to turn to that which God has not willed but He has rejected. Sin as sloth involves the "human refusal and failure to budge" from adherence to nothingness and self-contradiction, the disobedience to God's call of freedom.³⁵ Because this inaction which is sin cannot be separated from but is intrinsic to human persons including the human will, Barth argues that the sin of sloth exposes sin as an ontological problem separating God from humanity.³⁶

Sloth and the Neighbour

The sin of sloth also separates humans from each other. Barth wrote, "Man wills that which according to His incarnation God does not will. He wills the impossible. He wills to be man without and even in opposition to his fellow-man. . . . He does not live a genuinely human, but an inhuman, life, because he does not live as a fellow-man."³⁷ In sloth the human turns away from the grace given him by God to bring reconciliation with God and with the neighbour. "Inhumanity" is connected with this godlessness. In turning away from Christ, the human turns from the one who is fellow-human.

Barth exposes the manner in which humans may conceal their inhumanity through philanthropy, which he defines as "the focusing and concentrating of human will and action on the prosecution of one such anonymously human cause to a

³⁴ CD IV.2.393-395.

³⁵ CD IV.2.394, 433.

³⁶ See also CD IV.4.486-488 and Bromiley, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 202.

³⁷ CD IV.2.434.

victorious and successful outcome."³⁸ Yet such charity is not love at all but "a form of love in which, however sacrificially it is practised, the other is not seized by a human hand but by a cold instrument, or even by a paw with sheathed talons, and therefore genuinely isolated and frozen and estranged and oppressed and humiliated, so that he feels he is trampled under the feet of one who is supposed to love him."³⁹ This inhumanity is expressed in the power and exploitation of another. The sloth of withdrawal from the fellow-human is exposed by the self-giving of Jesus Christ for humanity.⁴⁰

Reconciliation of Fellow-humanity

Thus, the cross and the resurrection play a central role in this upward movement. In the incarnation, Jesus becomes the Fellow-human for the sake of humanity. Through the cross, Christ genuinely embraced the human situation and he radically transformed it as our brother.⁴¹ His resurrection declares him as the Royal Man who is reconciled with God.⁴² He lives as the new man in whom all humans "may discover that they are known and proclaimed as regenerate."⁴³ Humans cannot see this sin standing by itself. They can only see it in Jesus whose death and resurrection accomplished the deliverance from sin, the elevation of humanity, and the restoration of humans as covenant-partner of God.⁴⁴ Thus, Barth explained:

It is only in this knowledge [of Jesus and of the self in Jesus] that there is fulfilled the critical clarification, the liberation, in which man is given and shown his true frontier, and (without being merely cut loose from himself) is really brought behind and below himself. We have the old man behind and below us when we have Jesus Christ before and above us, and in Him ourselves as the new man who is elevated and exalted to fellowship with God; who is certain of his elevation and exaltation, inviolably, impregnably, and indestructibly certain; who cannot therefore be separated from the love of God.⁴⁵

³⁸ CD IV.2.438.

³⁹ CD IV.2.440.

⁴⁰ CD IV.2.452.

⁴¹ CD IV.2.293.

⁴² CD IV.2.297f.

⁴³ CD IV.2.395.

⁴⁴ CD IV.2.281.

⁴⁵ CD IV.2.285.

Sanctification for Fellow-humanity

The formation of human persons into fellow-humanity comes through the sanctification of humanity in Jesus Christ. The upward movement of Christ in his death and resurrection achieved the exaltation of the human, creating his new form of existence as the faithful covenant-partner of God, free to live in fellowship with God and neighbour, and to practice holiness in living by his commands. Barth called this sanctification the second moment of reconciliation. Justification describes the "I will be your God" and sanctification completes the "you shall be my people" of the covenant.⁴⁶ Barth described sanctification as God's fashioning of a holy people, "i.e. those who in spite of their sin have the freedom, which they have received from Him to live in it, to represent him among all other men, and to serve Him in what they are to do and suffer."⁴⁷

The Holy Spirit grants us "a very definite freedom."⁴⁸ God recreates humanity in Christ as obedient children and speaks to us, "Be what thou art."⁴⁹ Our being is transformed by his power and we are set in a new direction. This direction is one of freedom in Christ in which humans are liberated from the compulsion of continuing in disobedience into life as the brother of the one exalted, obedience to the command of God, and love for fellow-humans.⁵⁰

Like John Paul, Barth defined love as the giving of the self.⁵¹ Love thus entails relation with the neighbour.⁵² Love for the neighbour springs from the love, which God has given to humans. It is not a general love for humanity but a specific love for neighbours and enemies which is given as a witness of God's own love.⁵³ Christians are thus called and set in the direction of Christ in giving of themselves to witness to the love which God has already given to humanity. Later in the chapter, we will address the more systemic issues of politics and economics as they are related to Christ's exaltation and the establishing of the

⁴⁶ CD IV.2.499.

⁴⁷ CD IV.2.511.

⁴⁸ CD IV.2.363.

⁴⁹ CD IV.2.363.

⁵⁰ CD IV.2.312.

⁵¹ CD IV.2.728-731, 786.

⁵² CD IV.2.733.

⁵³ CD IV.2.802, 812.

Kingdom of God. For the time, however, we see that Barth's overwhelming emphasis is upon the participation which believers are given in Christ's relation with the Father. This participation creates human freedom to love the neighbour and to fulfil the criterion of humanity that is core to Barth's social ethics.

The Outward Movement: The Prophetic Role of Christ

In his time, Jesus lived and died as the Lord who humbled himself as servant and as the servant exalted to be Lord. Yet in his resurrection Jesus Christ lives eternally as the contemporary of all humans, active as a Prophet in His Word and by His Spirit.⁵⁴ Thus, while Barth described Christ's priestly work in his downward movement that brought about the justification of humanity and Jesus' upward and kingly movement, which sanctifies humans and draws humans to God, the resurrection and ongoing life of Christ as Prophet calls humans to an outward life of vocation and service.

Jesus Christ, The Prophet

As Prophet, Jesus Christ is first the true witness in both his speech and his act. Secondly, Jesus Christ is truth and light and his reconciling work is a prophetic word. As Barth explained, Jesus spoke the *logos* and he is the *logos*; he spoke to all people and his life was "the light of men"; he spoke of the covenant and he fulfilled the covenant; and as prophet he acted as mediator between God and humanity unlike any prophet before him.⁵⁵ However the world,⁵⁶ which Christ encounters, reacts with hostility. The light of Jesus shines into darkness and the darkness opposes it. Barth explained, "Word and revelation as this is active in great superiority yet has not so far attained its goal but is still wrestling toward it, being opposed by the power of darkness, which even though it yields in its clear inferiority, is still present and even active in its own negative and restrictive way. A history is here taking place; a drama being enacted; a war waged to successful conclusion."⁵⁷ Thus, the third aspect of Jesus'

⁵⁴ CD IV.3.497.

⁵⁵ CD IV.3.49-52.

⁵⁶ Barth defined world as this environment, "humanity; man in and with the cosmos; man in his creaturely and historical nature." CD IV.3.166.

⁵⁷ CD IV.3.168.

prophetic role is "Jesus as Victor."⁵⁸ His work of reconciliation overcomes the distance between God and human persons; humans perceive this work through his proclamation: "The Kingdom of God is at hand."⁵⁹ This proclamation declares the reality of the new human person and the new freedom in the Kingdom of God through Christ's vicarious work yet in opposition to this revelation of Christ, the world clings to the old reality and resists Christ with anthropocentric worldviews. However, at the conclusion of history, Christ will be proven the final victor in truth and light.

Human Truth and Falsehood

In this time between Easter and the end, Christ comes near to humans in his Spirit, encountering us, proclaiming his truth, and giving to us the time and space to live in this new human freedom. His revelation of truth exposes the falsehood of humans as they seek to evade his prophesy by establishing false 'truths.' Barth wrote, "The era *post Christum* is a sphere which is effectively controlled or even blockaded by human falsehood. It is also and much more the sphere in which the manoeuvres of lying man are constantly disrupted and thwarted as by an invisible hand."⁶⁰ God opposes this falsehood through the living and present reality of Jesus Christ, the self-declaration of the grace and truth of God.

Barth provides the friends of Job as an example of such pious falsity hidden in the garb of human goodness. The goodness and earnest religiosity of these men stands in marked contrast to the violent utterances of Job. Barth finds these men interesting because "on the one side such excellent people who are on such friendly terms with the true witness undoubtedly incur the guilt of the real falsehood of the man of sin, and yet on the other, the ground does not open beneath their feet to swallow them up as in the rebellion of Korah," but God extends his patience and goodness to them as well.⁶¹ The sinful falsity of these friends exposes the destruction that the neighbour can wreak against another, when reliant upon human wisdom and goodness. The truth attacks and judges such evasion and principled untruth which exalts the human person to the place

⁵⁸ CD IV.3.170f.

⁵⁹ CD IV.3.180.

⁶⁰ CD IV.3.475. Gorringer draws a relation between this comment and economics concerns, "The allusion to Adam Smith is unmistakable. Over ruling through advertising and the inducement of false desire, is the counter hand of God witnessing to the alternative truth of cooperation and true desire," Gorringer, 251.

⁶¹ CD IV.3.454.

of judgement or autonomous freedom or the imaging of one's own god, which looks differently from God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ meets us as the true witness. Christ proclaims the reconciliation of the human with God, which is active in himself.

What are the implications of this declaration for the human? In proclaiming and activating the reconciliation of man with God, Jesus calls the human out of darkness into light. This particular person, Jesus, frees all humanity from falsehood by rising and living for the world and by proclaiming God in the Word of grace and reconciliation and in the promised Spirit.⁶² Thus, the person is called into Christ's fellowship: the life of Christ in her and her life in Christ. The will of God forms the common standpoint and outlook of Christ and the church in her obedience to the work of God and God's will forms their final goal: service to the world.⁶³ Barth used the word "service" to denote this fellowship of action in which Christ is clearly superior and his work initiates the action of the Christian servant as a witness to God.⁶⁴ Yet the calling (*κλησις*) of the Christian is not a calling into a solitary life of service but into a church (*εκκλησια*).⁶⁵ Therefore, the prophetic word of Christ calls the human into fellowship with God and with the people of God in service to the world.⁶⁶

The Outward Movement and Political-Economic Justice

What is the service that the church gives to the world, specifically with regard to political and economic service? According to Barth, the church exists for the world in on-going service for the world in three aspects.

First, the community of Jesus Christ is the fellowship in which it is given to know the truth concerning the world. Barth explained, "The world does not know itself. It does not know God, nor man, nor the relationship and covenant between God and man. Hence it does not know its own origin, its state, nor its goal. It does not know what divides nor what unites. It knows neither its life and its salvation nor its death and

⁶² CI IV.3.486. Barth related this calling to election in 486ff. See John Webster on the universality of this particular human in *Barth*, (London: Continuum, 2000), 133.

⁶³ CD IV.3.598.

⁶⁴ CD IV.3.602-3.

⁶⁵ CD IV.3.681.

⁶⁶ Barth also makes this connection between the church and service to the world by asserting that the church has its basis in Jesus Christ who exists for the world. Because the church is for God and sent by Christ, the church exists for the world. CD IV.3.751-751.

destruction. It is blind to its own reality. Its existence is a groping in the dark. The community of Jesus exists for and is sent into the world in the first basic sense that it is given to it, in its knowledge of God and humanity and the covenant set up between them, to know the world as it is."⁶⁷ For this reason, the church exists as a light and a witness to the world, distinguishing itself from the world, and proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the world.⁶⁸

Secondly, Jesus Christ gives his community the knowledge and practice of solidarity with the world. Solidarity means that the church is committed to the world, participating in its situation, in the promise given to it, in the responsibility for the arrogance, sloth, and falsehood that reign in it, in its resulting suffering, and in the grace and hope in Jesus Christ.⁶⁹ The community is called to live with the world in compassion rather than fleeing from the world or holding oneself aloof.⁷⁰ In cases of injustice, in particular, the church cannot remain "neutral" by withholding her witness but she is called to pray and to fight for just peace.⁷¹

Third, the church has become obligated to and responsible for the world as co-operators with Christ. Barth wrote that the community is sent to the world "not merely knowing it better in its good and evil, its greatness and misery, nor merely hoping and suffering with it, but also waiting with it for its future and with it hastening towards the future."⁷²

In summary, the church has been given a task of (a) proclaiming Jesus Christ to humans and (b) caring for the recipient of this proclamation through service.⁷³ Barth likewise divides the specific forms of ministry into two categories: ministries of speech (or action by speech) and ministries of act (or speech by action).⁷⁴ The Christian ministry of act, which holds special implications for political and economic ethics is the ministry of the diaconate. The origin of the diaconate is described in Acts 6:1f when seven men are selected to undertake the *diakonia* of the daily provision for the widows.

⁶⁷ CD IV.3.769.

⁶⁸ Barth, *God Here and Now*, 66 and CCCC, 158-159.

⁶⁹ CD IV.3.773. Jüngel relates Barth's notion of solidarity with the world to church and state in *Christ, Justice, and Peace*, 61-62.

⁷⁰ CD IV.3.774-5.

⁷¹ Barth, "First Letter to the French Protestants," in *A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland*, 30.

⁷² CD IV.3.777.

⁷³ CD IV.3.830.

⁷⁴ CD IV.3.854-863.

The term has come to be used to indicate the special ministry to the physical or material distress of those within and outside of the community. As Jesus commanded, the community accepts solidarity with the least of the little ones (the *elachistoi* of Matthew 25:40 and 45), those who are marginalized, hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick, feeble, mentally confused, orphaned, seeking refuge, and imprisoned.⁷⁵ The diaconate reveals the Kingdom of God by addressing the physical needs of the person.

Barth addressed three issues in the theory and practice of the Christian diaconate:

1. Because the needs of individuals are grounded in certain disorders of human life in society, the prevailing economic, social, and political conditions often limit the human. The Christian community cannot turn a blind eye to social injustice or evade its responsibility as a member of that society. Rather, the community must "raise its voice and with its proclamation of the Gospel summon the world to reflect on social injustice and its consequences and to alter the conditions and relationships in question." Thus, Barth calls for Christian social criticism.⁷⁶
2. A second issue is the role of the diaconate as it relates to the state. The state has increasingly assumed responsibility for the material well-being of its citizens through various social programs. The church must recognise the possibilities which this change sets before her. First, the state can only tackle the physical and material needs but cannot provide for the whole person as the church can. Second, the state tends to function bureaucratically rather than person to person. Third, the state misses some people. Fourth, persons in the church can serve by working for the state in positions of service.⁷⁷
3. Although deacons and deaconesses may be specially called and fitted and endowed for places of service, the whole community must take a role in this service.⁷⁸

In this manner, then, the prophetic role of Christ draws the church outward, in service to the marginalized and the oppressed in society. The church is not required to make effective the reality of Jesus but to attest to his reality.

⁷⁵ CD IV.3.890-1.

⁷⁶ He wrote, "The diaconate and the Christian community become dumb dogs, and their service a serving of the ruling powers, if they are afraid to tackle at their social roots the evils by which they are confronted in detail." CD IV.3.893.

⁷⁷ CD IV.3.893-4.

⁷⁸ CD IV.3.894.

Thus, the service of the church reflects the two forms in which Christ lives in the Christian. First, Christ as the new Adam is the Mediator, Head and Representative of all, whose work belongs to himself. Humans can participate in this work passively, by faith. Second, Jesus imparts himself and calls others to be his heralds. Barth wrote, "Being called by and to the Christ engaged in the exercise of his prophetic office, they have no option but to attach themselves to Him with their own action, to tread in His steps, to become with Him proclaimers of the reconciliation of the world accomplished in Him, heralds of His person and work."⁷⁹

In summary, the prophetic role of Christ demonstrated the dependence of humanity upon the truth revealed in Him. This truth moves humans outward as a body of believers not primarily to establish themselves as the church or to proclaim ideas but to witness to the person of Jesus Christ. Witness entails proclaiming Christ in word as well as act; it includes proclaiming the justification of Christ and participating in the justice God commands by caring for the poor and marginalized in society.

Political and Economic Ethics

Thus far in our examination of Barth, we have focused on the reconciliation of Christ with the individual and the benefits conferred to social relations through his work. We have traced Barth's argument that Christ reveals an intrinsic problem with the concept of "unredeemed human goodness," for Christ's incarnation, his life, death, and resurrection demonstrate the extent to which humanity needed redemption and the inability for the human to become reconciled with God or neighbour through autonomous attempts at justice, love, and service. Christ reconciles humans to one another and enables them to participate in the true justice, the self-giving love, and the joyful service of God and the neighbour.

In this section, we will explore with the larger question of justice in society. Barth argued that the dilemma of sin in individual persons has created the larger problem of injustice in society. He argued that Christians are called to revolt against these systems and forces, the "disorder," to which humans have enslaved themselves.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ CD IV.3.606. For further discussion, see Webster, *Barth*, 135-6.

⁸⁰ He calls this revolt the "struggle for human righteousness." *The Christian Life*, 206.

This disorder directly results from the human revolt against the order of obedience to God.⁸¹ Regarding the origin of this disorder Barth stated the following:

It arises and consists in the unrighteousness of the fall of people from God which as such ineluctably carried with it their fall from one another, the changing of their being with one another, which corresponds to their being with God, into a general being without and against one another. In offending God they can only offend one another as well. They cannot deal righteously with one another, nor be liberal with one another, nor live at peace with one another. In and with the sin of Adam who wanted to be as God, there is already enclosed the sin of Cain, the murderer of his brother.⁸²

The human who pretends to be lord gives rise to and will find himself ensnared by what Barth calls the "Lordless Powers." These powers are unleashed by the rebellion of the human person against God, they are the human abilities which exalt themselves as lordless forces and become destructive towards the very person who thought himself lord of them.⁸³ These forces such as governmental absolutism, mammon, sport, and technology, when they create disorder, find the root of their power in the broken relationship between God and humanity. Thus, Christ came to revolt against and defeat these powers through his reconciliation. The Kingdom, which he established, restores the order and right relations for which humans long. In this section, we will explore Barth's conception of the Kingdom of God as it especially relates to the establishing of political justice.

The Kingdom of God

Barth described the Kingdom of God as the Lordship and Rule of God, which he established in this world through Jesus Christ.⁸⁴ Christ announced the establishing of the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount. Barth summarised this declaration:

Here on this earth and in time, and therefore in the immediate context of all human kingdoms both small and great, and in the sphere of Satan who rules and torments fallen man, God has irrevocably and

⁸¹ Barth wrote, "it may be presupposed that man's fall and alienation from God is the root of all evil and therefore of this evil too. This is the final and true basis of the disorder. Indeed, it is itself the original disorder, the true unrighteousness which darkens and burdens human life and fellowship. Man's alienation from God at once carries with it his self-alienation: the denaturalising of humanity and fellow humanity of his own existence, the contradiction of the determination, inalienably given to him as God's creature, that he should belong to God and have in him his Lord. . . ." *The Christian Life*, 214.

⁸² *The Christian Life*, 212.

⁸³ *The Christian Life*, 215.

⁸⁴ CD IV.2.655-6.

indissolubly set up the kingdom of His grace, the throne of His glory, the kingdom which as such is superior to all other powers, to which, in spite of their resistance, they belong, and which they cannot help but serve.⁸⁵

Yet Christ did not only announce the Kingdom, he himself is the Kingdom. He is the Lord who is King over the whole cosmos, the one who acted for humans, who has fought for them, who has taken their side against their enemies. Though humans have been unfaithful, God in Christ remained faithful to his covenant with them by establishing his Kingdom in freedom and power and grace.⁸⁶

Christ revealed this Kingdom to this world through analogy. Barth described Christ as created "after God" (*kata theon*) meaning that he exists analogously to the mode of existence of God. Barth explained, "In what he thinks and wills and does, in His attitude, there is a correspondence a parallel in the creaturely world, to the plan and purpose and work and attitude of God."⁸⁷ As the analogy of God, Jesus revealed the concern of God for the marginalized of this world and the freedom of the Kingdom of God over against and within the kingdoms of this world.⁸⁸

Barth recognised three approaches of Christ toward the economic and political realms of this world in which he revealed the freedom of the Kingdom of God analogously. First, Barth described the *passive conservatism* of Christ.⁸⁹ In this sense, Jesus accepted many things in principle or in practice which he could have attacked and set aside. With regard to economics, Jesus never came into direct conflict with the relationships and obligations of His setting. In the instance of the brother who asked for justice in the dividing of his father's inheritance, Jesus refused to judge and warned the brother against covetousness.⁹⁰ In his parables, he seemed to accept the labour practices prevalent in his day.⁹¹ He even seemed to accept poverty as axiomatic in his answer to the disciples who would have preferred almsgiving to the woman's lavish gift of perfume when he said, "You have the poor with you always."⁹²

⁸⁵ CD IV.2.688.

⁸⁶ CD IV.2.244.

⁸⁷ CD IV.2.166.

⁸⁸ See also Gerald Allan Butler, *Karl Barth and Political Theology*, (PhD Thesis, Duke University, 1973), 261-3.

⁸⁹ CD IV.2.173-175.

⁹⁰ CD IV.2.174; Luke 12:13-21.

⁹¹ CD IV.2.174; Luke 16:1f.

⁹² CD IV.2.174; Mark 14:7.

In addition, Jesus did not directly criticise the political authorities who “think to rule over the nations” nor does he stand against the oppressive imperialism or militarism of his day.⁹³ He recognised Pilate as an authority in relation to Himself and he did not allow Peter to resist the Sanhedrin guard.⁹⁴ Thus, Christ did not directly condemn the prevailing political or economic systems despite their oppression of the Jews, of women, and of the poor.

Second, although Jesus accepted and subjected himself to the prevailing orders, he remained *superior* to them. Barth exposed the breaches of economic order: What king ever pronounced freedom from punishment to a servant who had misappropriated what was entrusted to him?⁹⁵ What vineyard owner would pay his labourer equal wages for working differing hours?⁹⁶ What sense does it make that the human person who built new barns to house his harvest was described as fool?⁹⁷ And Jesus seemed to lack a proper understanding of trade and commerce when he condemned the small-scale financial activities of the temple merchants as a “den of thieves.”⁹⁸ In the political scale, Jesus’ command to “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” Jesus does not indicate two kingdoms alongside one another. Barth interpreted this passage to show that the human kingdom is authoritative and demands obedience yet this kingdom is sharply delimited by the one Kingdom of God.⁹⁹ He argued that these signal give warning of the threat of the free and revolutionary nature of the Kingdom of God.

Third, the coming of the Kingdom brought a crisis far more *revolutionary* than these human kingdoms had yet faced. Barth quotes the Markan passage, “Non one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins.”¹⁰⁰ He interpreted the old garment and old bottles

⁹³ CD IV.2.174; Mark 10:42.

⁹⁴ CD IV.2.174-5; John 19:11; Mt. 26:52.

⁹⁵ CD IV.2.176; Matt 18:23ff.

⁹⁶ CD IV.2.176; Matt 20:1ff

⁹⁷ CD IV.2.176; Luke 12:16f.

⁹⁸ CD IV.2.176; Mark 11:17.

⁹⁹ CD IV.2.176.

¹⁰⁰ CD IV.2.177; Mark 2:21-22.

as human orders, which are incompatible with the Kingdom of God. He wrote, "All true and serious conservatism, and all true and serious belief in progress, presupposes that there is a certain compatibility between the new and the old, and that they can stand in a certain neutrality the one to the other. But the new thing of Jesus is the invading Kingdom of God revealed in its alienating antithesis to the world and all its orders."¹⁰¹ For example, Christ simply but radically calls the economic order into question because neither he nor his disciples took part in the acquisition or holding of any possessions. His disciples and those who sought to follow him were told to leave everything, "Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven."¹⁰² Acts 2:44 describes the bold attempt of the early church to have all things in common, selling their possessions and distributing them to all, as any had need. Jesus' commands not to lay up treasures on earth and his command to take no thought for life, for food, and for drink challenge the presuppositions of a healthy economy. Barth noted, "Surely there could be no sound or solid economy, either private or public, without this laying up and taking thought? . . . Obviously this is to shake the basic pillars of all normal human activity in relation to the clearest necessities of life—and in the irritating form, not of the proclamation of a better social order, but of the free and simple call to freedom."¹⁰³

Christ's questioning of the political order finds far more revolutionary power in its lack of direct aggression. Barth claimed that he did not oppose the evil but he came to root it out. He instructed his disciples not to judge and not to resist evil but to turn the other cheek but to love their enemies and pray for their forgiveness as he did.¹⁰⁴ "It is again clear," Barth wrote, "for what political thinking can do justice or satisfaction to this injunction and to the One who gives it?—that this involves a shaking of every human foundation; that the right of God is quite incompatible not merely with the wicked totalitarian state but with every conceivable human regime; that the new thing cannot be used to patch or fill the old."¹⁰⁵

Barth concluded that the Kingdom of God is opposed to our whole world, this world which has fallen away from him. The Blumhardts influenced Barth in this

¹⁰¹ *CD IV.2.177.*

¹⁰² *CD IV.2.178; Mark 10:21.*

¹⁰³ *CD IV.2.178.*

¹⁰⁴ *CD IV.2.179; Matt. 5:38-39, 43; 7:1; Luke 23:34.*

¹⁰⁵ *CD IV.2.179.*

direction through their conception of the Kingdom of God as “the world to come intervening from outside and from first to last, not just limiting or even illumining this world, but with superior severity and goodness storming and smashing it in all its dimensions.”¹⁰⁶ Yet Christ did not directly oppose the structures of authority and call for revolution as many expected. Jesus Christ, the poor man who blessed and befriended the poor became the incomparable revolutionary because he “exposed the darkness of the order of this cosmos, questioning it in a way that is quite beyond our capacity to answer.”¹⁰⁷ Christ addressed the root problems of this world by opposing evil and human sin and by revealing the freedom of the Kingdom of God from injustice and evil and sin. In revealing this Kingdom, he also opened the way for all humans to participate in his Kingdom. Thus, Christ became human for humanity, at once a divine “No” and a divine “Yes,” judging the kingdom of humans yet bringing in himself a new Kingdom which “indicates and explains and interprets their being and determines and directs and characterises it.”¹⁰⁸

The Kingdom of God, the Church, and the State

We now turn to examine the significance of the Kingdom of God for the relationship between church and state. Those who become followers of Christ also become part of his body, the church. Barth described the Christian community as the community on earth that Jesus creates and upbuilds through his Holy Spirit and that which he rules as his earthly historical form of existence.¹⁰⁹ According to Barth, the church is not equivalent to the Kingdom of God but the Kingdom of God is the church.¹¹⁰ By this statement, Barth means that the Kingdom of God creates the Christian community as the church awaits the fullness of the Kingdom of God in the *eschaton*.¹¹¹ In this in-between time,¹¹² the command of God gives order to this community through their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, as attested in Scripture.¹¹³ Barth

¹⁰⁶ *The Christian Life*, 258.

¹⁰⁷ *The Christian Life*, 258.

¹⁰⁸ *The Christian Life*, 189.

¹⁰⁹ *CD IV.2.614*.

¹¹⁰ *CCCC*, 170.

¹¹¹ *CCCC*, 656.

¹¹² Meaning that the Kingdom of God has come in part.

¹¹³ *CCCC*, 682.

made several claims concerning the commands or laws given to the church but of special interest for this topic is the presupposition of the exemplary nature of church law. As exemplary, church law serves as a pattern for all human law.

If the Kingdom of God creates the church to live by the laws of Christ, how does the church relate to the laws of the state? First, we look at Barth's understanding of the state as it relates to the Kingdom of God. Barth defined the state as the possessor and guardian of the law and order of a nation.¹¹⁴ As discussed previously, the state exists as an instrument of grace to preserve common life from destruction.¹¹⁵ The state testifies of the Kingly rule of Christ because it has been set up by God as a sign of his protection and preservation.¹¹⁶ In the same way that the full Kingdom of God cannot be embodied in the church, the state cannot become the Kingdom of God. Rather, the state exists under and belongs to the Kingdom of God, as an analogue to the Kingdom of God, which the church preaches.¹¹⁷ In addition, the state serves God's plan for salvation by preserving mankind for God and providing time for repentance and reconciliation.¹¹⁸ Therefore, the task of the state is to discriminate between right and wrong and through its laws to set certain bounds upon the conduct of all humans, maintaining them by force.¹¹⁹

Second, Barth pictured the relationship of the state with the church as two co-centric spheres with a common centre in Christ. In other words, the grace of God in Christ provides the centre around which the circle of the church is formed to provide the spiritual centre of the larger circle, which represents the state. Thus, both share a common centre of grace and both exist under the lordship and direction of Jesus Christ.¹²⁰ For this reason, Paul commanded the Romans to submit to the state and even called the political authority "God's servant."¹²¹ The church forms the inner circle

¹¹⁴ CD IV.2.687-8. He defined political systems as "the attempts undertaken and carried out by men in order to secure the common political life of man by certain coordinations of individual freedom and the claims of the community, by the establishing of laws with power to apply and preserve them." In "The Christian Community in the Midst of Political Change," in *Against the Stream*, 80.

¹¹⁵ CD II.2.718-720

¹¹⁶ Barth, *A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland*, 12.

¹¹⁷ CCCC, 169.

¹¹⁸ CCCC, 156.

¹¹⁹ CCCC, 14.

¹²⁰ CD IV.2.687; This idea of co-centric spheres Barth drew from O. Cullman's *Königsherrschaft Christi und Kirche im Neuen Testament*, 1941, CCCC, 155 and 169.

¹²¹ Romans 13:4.

because it recognises the Lordship of Jesus and its laws are formed by the command of God. The state, on the other hand, does not recognise Jesus' Lordship and its laws are evil.¹²² Yet its laws are not wholly evil because they are still under the grace of God; the guidance of God is evident because "the question of law is raised in the world and the law is proclaimed and respected and practised."¹²³ The further the state moves from its rightful dependence upon Christ the more it becomes demonic.¹²⁴ In contrast, the more the state founds its laws upon the preaching of justification, the more it is a true system of law and a true state.¹²⁵

In Jesus Christ, both the world and church have been reconciled with God, creating a basis for solidarity between the two. The church, those who have been redeemed by the Holy Spirit, is not complete without the world but moves outward in solidarity with the world. Solidarity means "full commitment to it, unreserved participation in its situation, in the promise given it by creation, in its responsibility for the arrogance, sloth and falsehood which reign within it, in its suffering under the resultant distress, but primarily and supremely in the free grace of God demonstrated and addressed to it in Jesus Christ, and therefore in its hope."¹²⁶ Although the world does not recognise this solidarity with the church nor with others in society,¹²⁷ the interconnectedness of all humanity has been established in Jesus Christ.

In the midst of this similarity, Barth also emphasised the difference between the church and the state. He opposed any attempt by the church to impose her laws upon the state because he did not want the state to become the church or the church to become the state. He believed that the state was commissioned divinely and separately from the church, though both remain under the Lordship of Christ.¹²⁸

Being distinct from one another yet having the same basis in Christ, what role must the church take within the state? Although Barth did not delineate the implications

¹²² CD IV.2.721, 724.

¹²³ CD IV.2.724.

¹²⁴ *The Christian Life* 220-221. Barth opposes the state that does not serve man by safeguarding him and giving him life and peace when it becomes the totalitarian state which forces man to be ruled.

¹²⁵ "Church and State," in *Community, Church and State*, 126.

¹²⁶ CD IV.3.773.

¹²⁷ Barth argues despite the many philosophical, moral and religious insights regarding human solidarity that there is no basic impulse that drives the world in this direction. Rather, the world divides itself according to different causes and interests. Unfortunately, the church also ignores this deep interconnection established in Christ and also becomes sectarian. CD IV.3.775.

¹²⁸ "Church and State," 126-127.

of Christ's outward movement for the service of the state by the church, his theology of Christ as witness undergirded his approach in his political writings.¹²⁹ The primary service the church offers the state is the service of witness to Christ.¹³⁰ Having knowledge of the Kingdom of God, the church takes its share of political responsibility by preaching the gospel, by reminding the state of its connection with the order of divine salvation and grace, and by itself thinking and acting from its centre in the gospel.¹³¹ It calls the state from "neutrality, ignorance, and paganism into co-responsibility before God."¹³² For the state, like the church, remains under the Lordship of Christ for the preservation and salvation of humanity. Christ is Lord of the church and the world as Reconciler. His Lordship exists over the church as the Redeemer through the work of his Holy Spirit. The church must serve the state by helping it to point toward the Kingdom of God (of which the state is unaware) and by choosing those political possibilities that most closely correspond to the content of the gospel of Christ and proclaim the Lordship of Christ.¹³³

What sort of state should the church support? What kind of state most nearly corresponds to the divine ordinance? Using his method of analogy, Barth drew many implications for the state from his Christology as examples of how the church can make decisions on a Christian basis.¹³⁴ These parallels will be briefly summarised:¹³⁵

- a. Because Christ became a neighbour to humans and treated them with compassion, the church must find her primary interest in human beings and not in abstract causes which debase individuals.¹³⁶
- b. The primary purpose of the state is to limit and to preserve human persons so that the church may witness to divine justification. Thus, the state should be a

¹²⁹ The bulk of Barth's politically-related essays written after 1930 are found in *Against the Stream: Shorter Post-War Writings 1946-1952*; *The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day*; *A Letter to Great Britain From Switzerland*; *The Christian Life*; *Community, Church, and State*. Other significant works include: *God Here and Now*; *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*.

¹³⁰ "Church and State," 126-127 and CCCC, 158.

¹³¹ CCCC, 170 and "Church and State," 186.

¹³² CCCC, 171.

¹³³ CCCC, 170.

¹³⁴ CCCC, 179. Barth contrasts this with the natural law approach, see 163f and 179f.

¹³⁵ This sort of analogical reasoning sparked the criticisms addressed in chapter five. I am summarising those which have not been included previously in this chapter. See also XXV and XXVI, 178-9.

¹³⁶ These ten points can be found in CCCC, 171-177. See also *God Here and Now*.

constitutional state based upon commonly acknowledged law under which the church is protected and to which the church must submit.¹³⁷

- c. Because Christ came to seek and save the lost, the church must also take special interest in the lowest levels of society. Barth wrote, "The poor, the socially and economically weak and threatened, will always be the object of its primary and particular concern, and it will always insist on the State's special responsibility for these weaker members of society."¹³⁸ The church will stand for social justice in the political sphere, choosing the system which provides the greatest measure of social justice.
- d. As children of God who were are freely called, the church affirms the right to freedom in the political context.¹³⁹
- e. Yet the Lordship of Christ as Head over the body means that those rights (whether recognising the interest of the individual or the whole) must be interpreted as responsibilities which do not dominate the individual or the whole but seek to limit and preserve the life of humans.¹⁴⁰
- f. The church must stand for the equality of freedom and responsibility of all adult citizens despite various needs and abilities, on the basis of its fellowship under one Lord and their baptism in one Spirit.¹⁴¹
- g. The variety of gifts and tasks of the Holy Spirit indicate the need for separate functions in the state: legislative, executive, and judicial.¹⁴²
- h. The light of Jesus which destroys works of darkness means that the church recognises that it cannot support the state which deals in secret.¹⁴³
- i. The freedom of the Word of God to use human word as its mouthpiece means that the state should support open discussion rather than the control and censor of public opinion.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ CCCC, 172-3.

¹³⁸ CCCC, 173.

¹³⁹ CCCC, 173-174.

¹⁴⁰ CCCC, 174.

¹⁴¹ CCCC, 175.

¹⁴² CCCC, 175.

¹⁴³ CCCC, 176.

¹⁴⁴ CCCC, 177.

- j. As the church serves the community, the rule of political power must also serve the upholding of the law.¹⁴⁵

Thus, Barth demonstrated the continuous line of Christian political thought and action drawn by the correlation between explication and application. He acknowledged the striking similarity with the democratic state, though he maintained that the concept of "democracy" is powerless to describe the kind of State which most closely corresponds to the divine ordinance.¹⁴⁶ For according to Barth, *the* Christian doctrine of the just State simply does not exist for the proclamation of Christian doctrine entails the proclamation of God's Kingdom.¹⁴⁷

How does the church promote the formation or maintenance of a just state?¹⁴⁸ Should the church form itself into a particular Christian party that supports such policies? Barth opposed the formation of a Christian party because the politicising would inevitably obscure compromise its distinctly Christian content.¹⁴⁹ Rather, Barth encouraged Christians to enter the political arena anonymously, to act in accordance with their Christian faith, and thereby to live as witnesses to the gospel of Christ. Barth wrote, "The way Christians can help in the political sphere is by constantly giving the State an impulse in the Christian direction and freedom to develop on the Christian line."¹⁵⁰

The Unjust State

The state that refuses its centre in Christ becomes the unjust state. The church can identify the unjust state by asking three questions:¹⁵¹ Does this state abide by God's commands and do justice? Does it provide freedom for church to preach justification? Does it obey God? The state that attempts to exalt itself as god as Germany did under National Socialism or other totalitarian states become demonic by opposing the

¹⁴⁵ CCCC, 177.

¹⁴⁶ CCCC, 181-2.

¹⁴⁷ CCCC, 160.

¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, there is a gap in the teaching of the New Testament with regard to Christian citizens who bear some responsibility to the state because the New Testament focuses upon authoritarian states." "Church and State," 144.

¹⁴⁹ CCCC, 183-4.

¹⁵⁰ CCCC, 188 and "Church and State," 145-147.

¹⁵¹ *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, Gifford Lectures, 1937, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), III and IV.

Kingdom of God.¹⁵² In addition, the state that asserts itself too little, the state that fails to declare justice as Pilate failed when he recognised the innocence of Christ, also demonises itself.¹⁵³

How must the church relate to the unjust state? First, by believing that the Lordship of Christ means that the unjust state cannot achieve what it desires. Through the injustice of humans, the unjust state will continue to testify to God's justice.¹⁵⁴ For example, the injustice of Pilate brought about the justification of all humans through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁵ God works his justice despite and in the midst of human injustice. Secondly, under certain conditions the church is called to resist political power.¹⁵⁶ God must be obeyed first rather than men or women. At the times, when the state demands obedience that entails disobedience to God, the church must actively witness to faith in Christ and serve the state through resistance.¹⁵⁷ Thus Barth wrote, "Christians would be neglecting the distinctive service which they can and must render to the State, were they to adopt an attitude of unquestioning assent to the will and action of the State which is directly or indirectly aimed at the suppression of the freedom of the Word of God."¹⁵⁸

In summary, Barth argued that the stance of Christians against human injustice must be one of confrontation and revolt. They are to oppose injustice by practising solidarity with the world and by continuing to proclaim of the righteousness of God, his order of right, freedom and peace for humankind. Barth wrote:

They cannot acquiesce, then in the dominant disorder. For them this is not a final reality that cannot be altered. Instead, it is a powerful phantom that is destined to disappear. Hence, even though they cannot do away with it, in all circumstances they must swim against its current. If we call the continually new development of great disorder a revolution, we might say that even though Christians participate in it and

¹⁵² "Church and State," 118.

¹⁵³ "Church and State," 112-113.

¹⁵⁴ "Church and State," 118.

¹⁵⁵ "Church and State," 113.

¹⁵⁶ *The Knowledge of God*, 230.

¹⁵⁷ "Church and State," 231.

¹⁵⁸ "Church and State," 139. One example of Barth's revolt was his support of the British in their battles against Hitler. In *A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland*, 1-9. Yet Willis raised the important question, a point of contention between Barth and R. Niebuhr: Why did Barth not take a stronger stand against communism? See Willis, *The Ethics of Karl Barth* on Barth's response to communism.

share the guilt for the resulting plight, they are at the same time born counterrevolutionaries.¹⁵⁹

This counterrevolution never entails a fight against other people. Rather, it involves the continual petition to God, "Thy Kingdom come." For God's Kingdom judges and establishes humanity, institutes his perfect lordship over human relations, and overcomes the disorder that rules humanity. This prayer calls for God's righteous Kingdom and sets humans in the direction of obedience to his rule and participation in his reconciliation.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion to Part Two: Karl Barth

Having witnessed the horror of human self-interest as it wrought destruction against the human persons in two world wars, Barth sought to develop his social ethics in a way that both exposed and prevented such destruction. Chapter Four traced Barth's discovery that he could not merely graft onto the tree of human ethics a corrective branch of Christian ethics because the tree was poisonous to the core. The tree of autonomous social ethics must be uprooted and assessed by starting with God's self-revelation to humanity regarding human persons in the social sphere. Barth appealed that Christians begin thinking from a Christian epistemic basis starting with God's self-disclosure in order to form a foundation for social ethics.

In Chapter Five, we explored the new Christological criterion for social justice articulated in Barth's doctrine of election and his doctrine of creation. The covenant established by God with humanity contains the criterion for social justice because it includes the election of humanity into the covenant and the command of God that creates human freedom and solidarity. Jesus Christ reveals that the command of God the Creator establishes the criterion of real humanity for just political and economic relations.

Certainly, such critical criteria help to articulate social justice within the context of creation. Yet we are still left with the problem that injustice continues to wreak havoc despite the highest aims at social morality. Barth may say that humans must seek to uphold the life of the neighbour in political and economic spheres. Yet even the people who know this social command fail to apply it in all situations. According to Barth, the problem of human injustice runs much deeper than merely a lack of

¹⁵⁹ *The Christian Life*, 212.

¹⁶⁰ *The Christian Life*, 212.

knowledge. The root of human injustice is a broken relationship with God that has twisted social relations as well. Thus, reflecting on our prior metaphor, the seed planted in the soil of Christ's criterion for justice cannot be supposed to be the seed of a certain goodness in unredeemed humanity which might blossom into a just society if taught how to grow rightly. The very incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ reveals that no such seed exists, Barth would argue. The seed for human justice comes from the real humanity of Jesus Christ, the source of human goodness because he redeems humanity in his incarnation, his death, and his resurrection.

This chapter explored the doctrine of reconciliation in its implications for social justice. According to Barth, the person and work of Jesus Christ revealed that human sin is an ontological problem that God freely addressed through the incarnation of the Son, Jesus Christ, who by taking on humanity brought human persons under the judgement of God. By dying on the cross, Christ took on himself the judgement against human sin. By raising him from the dead, God declared victory over human sin in Jesus Christ and in the Son, He draws humans to himself for their sanctification. According to Barth, the person and work of Christ addressed not only the source of injustice, which is located in human evil. Christ also dealt with the seed of unredeemed human goodness, the seed that tries to bear the fruit of justice but whose very being necessitates freedom from the pride, the sloth, and the untruth which characterises it before justice can be borne. Through his work of reconciliation, Christ made right the relationships of God and humanity so that humans might live once again in free obedience to his just Lordship.

Barth's social ethics, therefore, are grounded in the Christological assertion that the humanity of Christ binds all humans to one another in a relation of solidarity through his creation, his incarnation, his death, and his resurrection. Drawing on his appeal to the *analogia relationis*, Barth argued that human ethics exist not as a universal law or an order of creation. Rather, ethics arises out of the very *being* of human persons in solidarity with one another through Christ.¹⁶¹ Christ has reconciled humanity in himself, laying the groundwork for ethical encounter in his own real humanity.

¹⁶¹ John Webster describes this new reality as the "moral space" in which humans exist in encounter. *Ethics of Reconciliation*, 216.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A CRITICAL COMPARISON

The primary focus of this work has been the theological anthropology that undergirds social ethics. The differing routes taken by John Paul and Karl Barth towards establishing a social doctrine or ethical foundation for social justice are to be expected in theological traditions which have developed historically in relative isolation from one another. The convergence between the two on several crucial fronts perhaps comes as a greater and welcome surprise at a time when the two traditions recognise the necessity of working toward unity at an ideological level and at the level of praxis.¹ First, both men believe that the critical criterion for evaluating all human societies is the criterion of humanity.² They argue that human persons must be valued and upheld as primary within economic and political systems. Both hold specific issues—from human rights abuses to the materialism rampant in capitalistic societies—up to the criterion of humanity. The ethical act that is just promotes the “true humanity” or the dignity of persons in society.

¹ See vital documents including, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, (Grand Rapids: Berdmans, 2000); Colson and Neuhaus, eds., *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996); Lutheran—Roman Catholic Joint Commission: *Church and Justification*, see background in H.A. Raem, “The Third Phase of Lutheran—Catholic Dialogue, 1986-93,” *One in Christ* 30 (1994), 310-318; English Roman Catholic—Methodist Committee, “Justification—A Consensus Statement,” *One in Christ* 24 (1988), 270-3; *Salvation and the Church: An Agreed Statement by the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission ARCIC II* (London: Church House and Catholic Truth Society, 1987); K. Lehmann and W. Pannenberg (hrsg.), *Lehrverurteilungen—kirchentrennend? I: Rechtfertigung, Sakramente und Amt in Zeitalter der Reformation und Heute*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); H. G. Anderson, T. A. Murphy and J. A. Burgess (eds.), *Justification by Faith*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985); and Hans Küng, *Justification*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1981). See also Anthony N.S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic—Protestant Dialogue*, (London: T&T Clark, 2002).

² For example, John Paul (JP), *CA*, 55 and Barth, *CD* III.4.340.

Second, John Paul and Barth both define true humanity according to a distinctly Christian anthropology. In other words, the ethic that promotes true humanity begins with God, the God revealed in Jesus Christ who created humanity and freely initiated his covenant with human persons.³ Through this creation and his gracious covenant of love, humanity was established.⁴ In Jesus Christ, humanity has been raised to "a dignity beyond compare" through renewed covenant partnership with God.⁵ True humanity is initiated and established in this covenant relationship, a relation not only of mutual love but also of obedience to the law and commands of God.⁶

In this manner, both Barth and John Paul locate the starting point for social ethics in God. They argue against the more prevalent naturalistic approach, which presumes that human persons decide what is right or what is wrong.⁷ They believe that God alone determines justice. By implication, human beings do not determine justice; they do not possess absolute moral criteria independent of their relationship with God. The autonomy of humanity, both men argue, does not mean that people may determine their own social standards. Rather, human autonomy entails the freedom to live in accordance with the justice that God has commanded, the morality that finds its origin in him.⁸

In addition, John Paul and Barth articulate a response to the sort of impasse reached in human rights debates, when the right of one party infringes upon the right of another. John Paul emphasises the responsibility of the human person to the common humanity of all, which he grounds in the image of God. In addition, his theme of self-gift (derived from the sacrificial mercy of God in Christ) also overcomes such a stalemate because mercy overcomes justice; through sacrificial giving, true humanity is actualised and fulfilled. The ethics of Barth also prevent such a stalemate because Barth has bypassed the individualism of rights ethics through his Christological anthropology. He has defined humans as persons in community, as an ontological construct, so that respect and responsibility for the neighbour is intrinsic to one's true humanity.⁹

³ JP, *God*, 139-40.

⁴ JP, *God*, 140-1 and Barth, *CD* III.3.3.

⁵ JP, *DV*, 8 and Barth, *CD* IV.2.281.

⁶ JP, *God*, 191 and Barth, *CD* II.2.510-512.

⁷ JP, *VS*, 35 and Barth, *CD* IV.1.402.

⁸ JP, *VS*, 32 and 35 and Barth, *CD* IV.1.449

⁹ These differences will be unpacked more fully in this chapter.

While both men address the impasse created by an ethic of rights, their anthropologies share a common appeal to Christ as the basis for social ethic, the two differ in one key area which impacts the means by which they arrive at a definition of ethics, their expectations for human action, and their interpretation of the social community. In this chapter, I will argue that the fundamental difference lies in the ontological construct of being. John Paul defines human persons in their analogous relation to God, a relation of continuity and discontinuity between Creator and creature which instils at the core of human beings both reason and free will. In these gifts, John Paul believes, men and women discover their dignity. Due to the fall of humanity, this dignity is marred by the propensity to sin. Christ becomes the fulfilment of humanity because as the God-man, he restores humanity to a dignity beyond compare. He completes that which the human was destined to become.

Karl Barth, on the other hand, defines real humanity in relation to Jesus Christ. Real humanity is being-with-God and with fellow-humanity. Human beings are those who are elected and summoned by God for relationship with God and fellow-humanity.¹⁰ Whereas John Paul allows for ontological continuity between God and human persons through the *analogia entis*,¹¹ Barth believed that human persons find their true being only in Jesus Christ. This divergence created differing interpretations of the nature of human knowledge and human acts as well as incongruous expectations for the possibilities for persons in society. The following two sections will explore this divergence in ontology that shapes assumptions regarding epistemic access to moral standards and human acts in society. The final section will engage these differences in the realm of social ethics by reflecting on the current situation in Israel/Palestine.

¹⁰ CD III.2.150 and CD III.4.117.

¹¹ The *analogia entis* implies "an *a priori* assumption of continuity between the divine and human realms which is argued to underlie and is justifiably presupposed, therefore, by theological statement independently of the consideration of God's Self-Revelation in the person of Christ." (Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, 123 fn. 6). John Paul's doctrine of the *analogia entis* must not be misunderstood on this point, as allowing for the total comprehension of God or supposing total continuity. For John Paul writes, "The essence of God cannot be enclosed in any definition. If, in our thought about God, with the category of 'being,' we use the analogy of being, with this we bring out the 'non-resemblance' much more than the resemblance. We bring out the incomparability much more than the comparability of God with creature (as the Fourth Council of the Lateran also recorded in 1215)." (*God*, 123.) While John Paul maintains the incomprehensibility of God and the more complete understanding of God through his revelation, the point is that the continuity for which the *analogia entis* does allow, forms the foundation for moral theology. On this point, see Chapter Two of this thesis, section titled, "The Foundation of Morality upon the *Analogia Entis*."

Human Ontology and Epistemic Access to Justice

The fundamental assumptions that shaped the ontological differences between John Paul and Barth can be found in the former's notion of the *analogia entis* and the latter's ontology of relation to Jesus Christ. As discussed in Chapter Two of this work, the *analogia entis* forms the basis for John Paul's moral theology.¹² John Paul believes that human beings are ontologically connected with God through shared being. Their very existence determines that their nature is good. Because of this ontological continuity, the good that exists in men and women is the good of their nature and it is not weakened by sin. Wojtyla wrote, "The good connected with the very substance of our nature is not even diminished by sin, but the good connected with our natural inclination is reduced by sin, although not wholly destroyed, unlike the goods of virtue (moral good) and grace (supernatural good)."¹³ While the reason is affected by sin, human beings continue to have epistemic access to the good through reason.¹⁴ Reason ascertains the good and posits moral norms that are exemplified in God. In short, John Paul's ontological assumptions regarding the connectedness of God and humanity means that we may apprehend justice by means of our reason.

Barth believed that a continuity between God and human beings may exist but that such continuity is known by the revelation of God and is only maintained because God, in electing men and women to participate in his being, himself became human.¹⁵ Human persons should not appeal to a metaphysical principle of being (the *analogia*

¹² See Chapter Two, Section One, entitled "The Dignity of Persons in Wojtyla's Philosophical Anthropology."

¹³ Karol Wojtyla, MPB, 74.

¹⁴ *VS*, 1.

¹⁵ Often Barth's epistemology is misunderstood at this point. In demonstrating this point, Alan Torrance comes to the following conclusion: "We may acknowledge that Barth is indeed sceptical about the capacity of some supposed human faculty of reason to establish theological truth 'off its own bat.' It reflects his sense of the epistemic incapacity of fallen creaturehood that he refuses to go . . . with traditional Roman interpretations of an *analogia entis*, on the other hand, where these are grounded in a metaphysic of being which commits one to an ultimate and foundational continuity between the divine and the 'natural' or human order. However, his carefully nuanced discussion of these issues is certainly not grounded in a foundational assertion of human impotence at the rational, epistemic, semantic, symbolic, or any other level. Rather, it is essentially concerned to establish that it is theologically inappropriate to operate in terms of an 'idea of being in which God and man are always comprehended together, even if their relationship to being is quite different, and even if they have a quite different part in being.' To argue that in so far as the human being is a being, the human creature, 'is able to know a being as such' and that therefore, 'in principle he is able to know all being, even God as the incomparably real being' and that 'Therefore if God is, and we cannot deny his being, or on the other hand, our own being and that of creation, necessarily we must affirm his knowability apart from His revelation,' is, for Barth, theologically invalid." *Persons in Communion*, 166-67. Cf. *CD* II.1.82-3.

entis) in which both God and humanity have a part. Rather, they should appeal to an ontology of relation to Jesus Christ, who provides the ontological ground of analogy. Humans can know God, can know justice or wrong, inasmuch as God reveals himself and his command.¹⁶ Thus, God's justice is a revealed justice, revealed in the person and work of Jesus.

Later commentators, such as Eberhard Jüngel, argue that Barth initially misunderstood the *analogia entis* and later relinquished his criticism of it.¹⁷ Alan Torrance, on the other hand, suggests that Barth never relinquished his rejection of the *analogia entis* as a metaphysical principle.¹⁸ We will demonstrate the viability of Torrance's argument in two parts. First, Barth's understanding of the *analogia entis* reflects the primacy of the metaphysical principle of being as the ground of epistemic access. This point is evidenced in Barth's own explanation of the *analogia entis*, in dialogue with Catholic scholarship:

You ascribe being to God in His work and activity. But you also ascribe it to man, even if in infinite and qualitative disparity. Therefore, whatever may be said about the inadequacy of all other analogies, and as the meaning and justification of all other intrinsically ambiguous analogies, you acknowledge analogy between God and man, and therefore one point at which God can be known even apart from His revelation. That is to say, you acknowledge the analogy of being, the *analogia entis*, the idea of being in which God and man are always comprehended together, even if their relationship to being is quite different, and even if they have a quite different part in being. As to himself a being, man is able to know a being as such. But if this is so, then in principle he is able to know all being, even God as the incomparably real being. Therefore if God is, and if we cannot deny his being, or on the other hand, our own being and that of creation, necessarily we must affirm His knowability apart from his revelation. For it consists precisely in this analogy of being which comprehends both Him and us.¹⁹

¹⁶ Barth, *HSCL*, 10.

¹⁷ Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. Darrell Guder, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 282-283 and "Die Möglichkeit Theologischer Anthropologie auf dem Grunde der Analogie," *Barth-Studien*, (Gütersloh, 1982), 210f. See also Hans Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 154; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 162-7; Colm O'Grady, *The Church in Catholic Theology: Dialogue with Karl Barth*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), 7-10.

¹⁸ Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 162-3. Cf. Robert Sanders, *Political Responsibility for Economic Life in the Mature Theology of Karl Barth*, (Dissertation, Berkeley, Graduate Theological Union, 1986), 40-42.

¹⁹ *CD* II.1.81. Barth acknowledged that Söhngen's starting point with the action of God avoided this pitfall. But he argued that this starting point is not reflective of Roman Catholic doctrine on the whole.

As this quotation demonstrates, Barth believed that the *analogia entis* formed the starting point for Catholic epistemology.²⁰ His demonstration that human persons know God through shared being resonates with the assumptions by Wojtyla regarding the foundation for moral theology.²¹ Secondly, Barth rejected the *analogia entis* as a metaphysical principle because he argued that it abstracted God from his real work and activity. Such a notion, Barth claimed, introduced a foreign God into the sphere of the church by attempting to unite the triune God with the Aristotelian concept of being.²² On the contrary, Barth argued, God's being is revealed through God's Word and God's act (i.e. God's readiness to make himself known.)

This insight raises the question whether Jüngel was correct in claiming that Barth relinquished his criticism of the *analogia entis*. Even in the later years when Barth incorporated God's "togetherness with man" into his anthropology, he did so on the basis of God's Word and act in Jesus Christ rather than human capabilities. In addition, Barth's discussion of the "lesser lights,"²³ continued to maintain that "the eternal will and decree of God has in itself nothing whatever to do with the laws knowable and known in the cosmos"²⁴ for the lesser lights "are not divine disclosures nor eternal truths"²⁵ but relative and limited truths of creation which affirm the relative and limited natural knowledge of humans.²⁶ Therefore, though Barth did indeed appeal to the *analogia fides* and employ analogical methodology in arriving at his ethics, as

²⁰ Barth wrote, "Strong opposition must be made to the idea that the metaphysics of being, the starting-point of this line of thought, is the place from which we can do the work of Christian theology..." (CD II.2.530). Rahner and von Balthasar attribute the prominence of the *analogia entis* in Barth's critique to his prior dialogue with Przywara "who first elevated it from being a modest study somewhere in logic or general ontology to being a really important nodal point of theological discourse." [Rahner, *Theological Investigations* V, trans. Karl-H. Kruger, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978), 59. Cf. von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 35-6.] It is not within the scope of this work to address this broader question of whether the *analogia entis* is in fact the nodal point of theological discourse. We have attempted to demonstrate, however, the influence that the underlying ontological assumptions associated with accepting the *analogia entis* as the basis for the moral norm had upon Wojtyla/John Paul's social doctrine.

²¹ See Wojtyla's article, On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm," *Persons and Community*, 73-94.

²² CD II.1.84.

²³ Küng claims that Barth changed positions in this discussion of the lesser lights. The subsequent quotation, however, demonstrates that Barth continued to oppose the *analogia entis* and an *a priori* principle. Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 154.

²⁴ CD IV.3.151

²⁵ CD IV.3.141.

²⁶ CD IV.3.162.

Torrance argued, Barth never did retract his rejection of the *analogia entis* as a metaphysical principle.²⁷

The *Analogia Entis* and Social Doctrine

What, then, are the implications of the *analogia entis* for articulating Catholic ethics? According to Barth, this assumption affects "the whole edifice" of Catholic moral doctrine. First, he called the moral doctrine into question because of its incapability of seriously establishing the concept of divine command.²⁸ An imperative finds meaning in that which is over it, in that from which it is derived. By grounding obligation in being, the imperative is "ontically subordinated by another, and noetically to be derived from this other."²⁹ So Barth asks, "But if what is over it is the being in which man participates in his way as God does in His, how can it be and become imperative except with the assistance and co-operation of man, except on the presupposition of his agreement?"³⁰ On such a presupposition, then, it is impossible for the command to confront the being and existence of that human as a command of *God*, "for the command does not have behind it the eternal power and severity of predestination, of the free goodness of God."³¹

Second, Barth argues that the *analogia entis* obscures theological ethics because it supports the idea that ethics can be derived from reason alone. This sets revelation against the light of reason, and it can hide that which is truly Christian. Barth summarised:

The complaint which we have to make against the Roman construction of the relationship between theological ethics and general human ethics is that it is dominated by this great distraction [the *analogia entis*], and therefore it only plays at theological ethics. It thinks it can combine and co-ordinate the Christian and the human far too easily. To achieve this combination and co-ordination it has emptied out what is Christian.³²

²⁷ Barth, *The Humanity of God*, 45. Barth wrote, "It is a matter of *God's* sovereign togetherness with man, a togetherness grounded in Him and determined, delimited, and ordered through him alone." This togetherness is entirely different from the Catholic ground of unity on a ground of being that is entirely neutral because Barth's 'togetherness' originates in the Word and act of God, in the humanity of Jesus Christ.

²⁸ CD II.2.532.

²⁹ CD II.2.532.

³⁰ CD II.2.532.

³¹ CD II.2.533.

³² CD II.2.533-4.

Barth's overriding concern, therefore, with the *analogia entis* was the deification of autonomous human ethics in place of the command of God. He wanted to maintain that God's command alone reveals and determines just human behaviour. He feared that the assumption that people could know just ethics through their own reason opened the door to favouring human attempts at ethics above God's command. Even the smallest opening, Barth believed, could lead to the worst kinds of violence against fellow-humanity. Thus, in his rejection of the *analogia entis*, he sought not only to slam the door on such attempts but to throw away the key!

Recently, however, Carl Braaten has raised the following question, "What would Barth have to say about the latest papal encyclicals?"³³ For in the papal encyclicals, *Evangelium Vitae* and *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul sought to re-establish a theological basis for "natural law."³⁴ He argued against those Catholic moral theologians who appealed to a notion of natural law that did not find its root in God's commands, and he opposed the modernist definition of autonomy as freedom that creates moral norms. As evidenced in Part One of this thesis, John Paul moved much closer to Barth's position. He began closing the door on the sort of moral theology against which Barth reacted so forcefully.

Yet did John Paul close the door against this problem entirely? His appeal to the *analogia entis* reveals that he did not. While the revelation of God in Christ and in scripture shaped his ethic substantially, John Paul continued to appeal to the *analogia entis* as the basis for continuity between God and humanity and as the foundation for human knowledge of the justice of God.³⁵

The first example can be found in John Paul's difficulty with the relationship between justice and mercy in *Dives in Misericordia*, which demonstrates his appeal to a category of justice that is located in something other than the revelation of God. He describes justice as if it is a category in which both God and human beings share, and which God exemplifies. John Paul writes, "Justice is an authentic virtue in man, and in God signifies transcendent perfection."³⁶ He describes justice as an "order" and a

³³ Carl E. Braaten, "A Response," in *A Preserving Grace: Protestant, Catholics, and Natural Law*, ed. Michael Cromartie, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 34.

³⁴ *VS*, 20. Russell Hittinger also supports this claim in his article, "Natural Law and Catholic Moral Theology," *A Preserving Grace*, 19-30.

³⁵ The knowledge is completed or fulfilled in God's revelation.

³⁶ *DM*, 4.

"norm" that is "precise and often too narrow."³⁷ Such a description makes justice sound as if it is a concept that exists apart from God's revelation, for God himself must "go beyond the order of justice" in sacrificing his son.³⁸ Although John Paul attempts to ground justice in the "salvific order,"³⁹ his very criticism of justice demonstrates that it is an abstract concept existing, at least partially, outside of God. For John Paul, justice appears to be a category, like being, in which both God and human persons share, a virtue that God exemplifies. He defines it as a "norm" that must be conditioned by God's love in order to justify men,⁴⁰ rather than defining justice by the very act of God's justification revealed in Jesus Christ.

Second, the argument in *Fides et Ratio*, that natural knowledge and philosophy lead to truth about God, betrays John Paul's optimism about the capabilities of human reason. According to Plantinga, such positivism simply cannot be echoed or embraced in reformed doctrine.⁴¹ Even if such a continuity between God and humanity, which gave epistemic access to morality, to knowledge of good and evil, existed at one time, the fall brought about the utter depravity of humanity: human will as well as human reason. Barth's later work did not undermine this early epistemological starting point. For example, in *CD IV.1* he argues again that in his desire for knowledge of good and evil, a human misunderstand himself. For God alone knows good and evil, and his Word alone reveals morality to human persons.⁴²

In conclusion, Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* as a metaphysical principle entailed his rejection of the natural law basis for Catholic ethics. His ongoing insistence that good and evil are not inherently known but are revealed by God, reflected Barth's primary concern that humans allow the Word of God to oppose self-deification and sin. The theory of the *analogia entis* opened the door to John Paul's belief that humans can know the command of God through natural knowledge. Even if such moral theology is refined and completed by revelation, the door remains opened to humans placing too much confidence in their natural knowledge and failing to hear the confronting and

³⁷ *DM*, 5.

³⁸ *Jesus*, 426.

³⁹ *DM*, 7.

⁴⁰ *DM*, 7 and 12.

⁴¹ See Plantinga's critique in Chapter Three of this work, in the section entitled, "The Dignity of Reason."

⁴² *CD IV.1*.448-50.

opposing Word of God, the Word that reveals and judges every aspect of the person, including human reason.

Barth's Ontology and Ethics

The universal appeal of John Paul's ethics of natural law call into question the confessional nature of the ethics of Barth. Having closed the door against knowledge of God's truth and command through human reason, does Barth limit moral knowledge to those within the Christian faith? Does he shut the door of ethical dialogue against those who do not believe in Jesus Christ? Whereas John Paul's theory of natural law creates a basis for ethical knowledge that is universal,⁴³ Barth's complete dependence upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ appears to limit ethical knowledge to those who share belief in Christ. Ray Anderson summarises the problem: "Barth's rejection of the supposed 'point of contact' (*Anknüpfungspunkt*) as a basis for natural theology appears to undermine Barth's theology as ethical address, particularly as an appeal for social justice and moral responsibility in the public and political sphere."⁴⁴ Can Barth's ethic be implemented in the public sphere? Can Christians call people to account for social justice without a theological prolegomena?

Barth never sought a "neutral ground" or "point of contact" with humanity that is apart from Christ. For Barth, Jesus Christ is the point of contact between humans. Jesus Christ is the neighbour of all humans, the one who restores human relations and who determines just social behaviour toward the neighbour.⁴⁵ If Jesus is the point of contact, how did Barth make his ethical appeal to the non-Christian sphere? He certainly did not appeal to a law in which all share a common knowledge.⁴⁶ Rather, he appealed to the Christian witness to the world.⁴⁷ According to Barth, Christians proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ to the world, to those who are chosen in Christ, to those toward whom God has spoken his command, to those who are part of God's

⁴³ John Paul writes, "The natural law involves universality. In as much as it is inscribed in the rational nature of the person, it makes itself felt to all beings endowed with reason and living in history. . . . Inasmuch as the natural law expresses the dignity of the human person and lays the foundation for his fundamental rights and duties, it is universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all mankind." (VS, 51.) See also VS, 52: "These universal and permanent laws correspond to things known by the practical reason and are applied to particular acts through the judgement of conscience."

⁴⁴ Ray Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 133.

⁴⁵ *The Shape of Practical Theology*, 133.

⁴⁶ "The Christian Community and Civil Community," 163-4, 168.

⁴⁷ Stanley Hauerwas developed this theme further in his Gifford Lectures, published as *With the Grain of the Universe*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001), 173-204.

Kingdom without realising his reality.⁴⁸ They witness to the world both proclaiming the reality of Christ and also expounding the ethical implications of his reality.⁴⁹

By using the theme of witness, Barth emphasised that humans do not (a) autonomously decide what is right and wrong or (b) use their rational capacity to discern right and wrong according to a universal law. Rather, they listen to God's revelation, his personal command, and they obey. There are times, Barth said, when the world's law will display greater wisdom than that in the church. The church must accept this Word of correction as well.⁵⁰

What does the witness of the church mean for ethics in the political and economic realms of human life? The Christian witness does not attempt to set up the Kingdom of God on this earth in the political economy.⁵¹ Rather, the Christian witnesses to the reality of the Kingdom that God has initiated. The justice that may be established on earth, in the political or economic sphere, exists as an analogue to the Kingdom of God. Thus, Barth employs his analogical method in articulating ethics for the secular sphere, a sphere whose centre remains Jesus Christ, even if he is not recognised as such. With regard to social ethics, Barth appeals to the criterion of humanity using the concept of the neighbour.⁵² He writes, "The Church is based on the knowledge of the one eternal God, who as such became man and thereby proved himself a neighbour to man, by treating him with compassion. The inevitable

⁴⁸ Barth wrote, that the church "desires that the active grace of God, as revealed from heaven, should be reflected in the earthly material of the external, relative, and provisional actions and modes of action of the political community. It therefore makes itself responsible in the first and last place to God—the one God whose grace is revealed in Jesus Christ—by making itself responsible for the cause of the State. And so, with its political judgements and choices, it bears an implicit, indirect, but none the less real witness to the gospel." CCCC, 171.

⁴⁹ Barth, *God Here and Now*, 66; CD IV.3.777 and 830. William James takes the hearing of God's command a step further in his thesis, by differentiating between the formal and material basis of the command and arguing that the material content of the command can be heard from below without a religious ethic. He writes, "For Barth, the material ethical content of the command is located in the context of its being 'heard.' This context is not restricted to the sphere of proclamation (the Church) but is grounded in the encounter of one person with another (others). This encounter takes place wherever humans engage in social and political intercourse. The command of God as a formal principle is not then 'heard' until it is heard in this context, with the material content derived out of the demand that humans uphold each other's basic humanity with justice and responsible action." James, 54.

⁵⁰ CD IV.2.726.

⁵¹ CCCC, 169.

⁵² William James demonstrates Barth's construct of neighbour as ethical criterion in his doctoral thesis, 185-205.

consequence is that in the political sphere the Church will always and in all circumstances be interested primarily in human beings."⁵³

In answer to the questions that are posed by John Paul's appeal to natural law, Barth appealed to no common law or point of contact outside of the God-man Jesus Christ, who is the basis for solidarity between the church and the world.⁵⁴ Christian ethics can be implemented in the world but never on a different foundation than the gospel. Did Barth close the door of ethical dialogue, shutting out those who do not believe in Jesus Christ? First, Barth believed that the Christian can only address the non-Christian as one who exists and stands in the light of Jesus Christ and under the command of God.⁵⁵ The Christian should not appeal to another foundation, such as notions of general humanity or orders of creation or, indeed, orders of the cosmos. Nor should Christians appeal to an ethical principle that does not find its material starting point in human personhood. In this manner, even the appeal to social justice becomes an act of witness because it rests upon a foundation of co-humanity that is grounded in Christ.⁵⁶ Second, though non-Christian thinkers may begin from a different foundation, Barth acknowledges that they may come to similar moral insights, for example, in both agreeing that the State should be socially responsible.⁵⁷ In these similarities, they find dialogue. Third, in his discussion of the lesser lights, Barth indicated that true and good dialogue is possible based upon the witness of creation. He allowed for truth to be known through creation in accordance with the finiteness and limitation of humanity. By implication, ethics may also be conceived in analogy to this limited knowledge. Barth explained the possibilities of these lesser lights of creation:

If this dialogue [the self-converse of creation] leads to results, and therefore to lights, words and truths as the emergence of certain knowable and known constants of intelligible and intelligent cosmic being, these can and should, as hypotheses, provide foundations and

⁵³ CCCC, 171.

⁵⁴ CD IV.3.776.

⁵⁵ Barth asked, "Is God's revelation revelation of the truth, or is it only the source of certain religious ideas and obligations, alongside which there are very different ones in other spheres? Outside and alongside the kingdom of Jesus Christ are there other respectable kingdoms? Can and should theology of all things be content to speak, not with universal validity, but only esoterically?" CD II.2.526. Webster explains, "Christian ethics retains a claim to universal validity, even though that claim is not unavailable under any other description than that which it takes in the sphere of Christian confession." *Ethics of Reconciliation*, 102.

⁵⁶ Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, G.T. Thompson, trans., (New York: Harper, 1959), 93-94. Hauerwas also makes this argument in *With the Grain*, 200-201.

⁵⁷ CCCC, 180.

materials for the continuation of the dialogue, but, in sharp contrast to the definitive Word of God, they cannot claim final validity, since the end of the dialogue is not yet in sight, it must proceed further from the point now reached, and the goal can be reached, if at all, only with the end of the whole of the present form of the cosmos and its self-witness.⁵⁸

The truth knowable in creation is limited. Moral statements reached in common will never be considered final. But at the same time, Barth argued, they should not be underestimated; they can be counted upon within limitation. While moral statements can be valuable for living in this sphere, they will always be challenged and relativised by the final self-declaration of God.⁵⁹ According to Barth, then, Christians may find commonalities with non-Christians in the election of Jesus Christ; they may find ethical behaviours upon which they agree and from which the church might learn better ways of living in accordance with God's command. The ultimate beginning and end of ethics for the church will always remain God's gospel in Christ and the command that corresponds to this gospel.

In conclusion, Barth's ethic can sustain a dialogue with people who do not share his Christian beliefs. Such dialogue is a possibility because of the basis for solidarity in Jesus Christ, in whom all have been elected to become children of God, to live in obedience to his command, and to live in accordance with their personhood as co-humanity. Christian ethics witnesses to this gospel and teaches persons to live in a manner that corresponds to this truth. Even if persons do not know the whole truth about God as he reveals himself, the lesser lights of creation's revelation might also create a basis for moral appeal; although, they should never create a basis for speaking with confidence about God or humanity. Having been given God's revelation in Jesus Christ, Christian ethics should begin in no other place. Yet from this starting point, Christians may arrive at similar ethical conclusions as those outside the faith, and they may work in solidarity toward social justice. The difference for Christians is that the particular human, Jesus Christ, will constantly stand as the critical criterion of the theory and humanistic praxis in the social realm.

In this sense, Barth's ethic, while ultimately dependent upon theological prolegomena, can be articulated in a manner that facilitates a way forward with ethicists

⁵⁸ *CD* IV.3.162-3.

⁵⁹ *CD* IV.3.163. Barth likewise applied this understanding in his anthropological discussion of phenomenology by arguing that while it may prove helpful in understanding and interpreting humanity, it remains limited with a need for critique by the revelation of man in Jesus Christ. *CD* III.2.202.

who do not share his core assumptions regarding God, Christ, and humanity. Although it lacks the more simple and universal appeal of natural law,⁶⁰ it guards against the temptation for proponents of natural law to lose a distinctly Christian witness in their attempt to create a point of contact with the world and to inadvertently support an un-Christian humanism.

Epistemological Assumptions in Dialogue

Both John Paul and Barth appeal to the criterion of humanity in defining just social ethics. While they both appeal to Christ as the one who reveals true humanity, John Paul's additional reliance upon natural law and the *analogia entis* creates a divergence between the two. Barth poses the challenge to John Paul: If Christ is indeed the full revelation of humanity, then why is there a need to appeal to other sources? He argues that Jesus Christ must be the sole criterion for real humanity. Knowledge of true humanity is realised through Jesus Christ.

The Second Vatican Council certainly affirmed this belief and the writings of John Paul have developed this important criterion further, especially as it relates to social justice. We find a way forward by challenging John Paul to take this affirmation more seriously and to apply it more fully to his epistemological assumptions. The Protestant side of this discussion would challenge John Paul to begin with Christian doctrine, to begin with Jesus Christ, in developing a moral theology. It would ask him to allow the revelation of God in Christ to critique his epistemological assumptions. Rather than appealing to both the *analogia entis* and to Jesus Christ, it would challenge him to begin with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as a critique of his philosophical anthropology. The *analogia entis* and natural law may indeed exist but they provide no place to *begin* in naming the social criteria for human justice.⁶¹ As Christians, our starting point must be the person of Jesus Christ.

Such a starting point would indeed appeal to John Paul's personalism because it defines justice not simply as a law or norm, which is "often too narrow,"⁶² but in the person and act of Jesus Christ. Social justice does not mean merely the fulfilment of a

⁶⁰ William Werpehowski rightly argues that "the great failure of Barth's political ethics is that this application is never accomplished with clarity or rigor. "Justification and Justice in the Theology of Karl Barth," *The Thomist* 50 (1986):632.

⁶¹ Human freedom, for instance, is not grounded in the *analogia entis*, but in the person of Jesus Christ. *The Christian Life*, 23.

⁶² *DM*, 5.

law, but it means first being-with-God in a relationship of trust, humility, and obedience made possible through human election in Jesus Christ. Secondly, it means being-with-fellow-humanity through the gift of self in love and obedience to God's Word. The theology of Barth, then, challenges John Paul and the Catholic church to begin with faith in Jesus Christ in assessing and forming the ethical criterion of humanity. In this manner, the church can guard against the sort of humanism that exalts the human and human reason above God and ultimately destroys the neighbour.

Human Ontology and Act

In addition to the epistemological questions regarding the basis for social ethics, this comparison between John Paul II and Barth's social ethics also raises a fundamental question regarding human nature and the propensity for justice: Is the unredeemed human capable of just behaviour in society? In this section, we will look at this question from three angles. First, we will compare John Paul and Barth's differences regarding human capacity and incapacity for just acts. The question of capacity and incapacity leads to a second issue regarding the meaning of human justification as it relates to social justice. The third aspect of this question relates justification to the formation of human persons and society through act. I will seek to demonstrate the differences between John Paul and Barth in response to this question that has emerged from the fundamental ontological issues we have raised.

Human Capacity for Just Behaviour

A primary difference between John Paul and Barth lies in this area of the human ability to choose good. Both John Paul and Barth believe that the human person is fundamentally good because persons are created by God and in his good image. However, their interpretation of the effect of the fall of humanity creates this vital difference regarding unredeemed human goodness. John Paul believes that the human freedom to choose between good and evil is a vital capacity of true humanity which has been marred by sin but not lost entirely.⁶³ Barth, in contrast, believes that human sin has so depraved the individual that she has lost her capacity to choose that which is good. Only in Christ, Barth would argue, can the human gain freedom to choose in

⁶³ For this reason, he can appeal to those outside of the Christian faith to choose just acts toward the neighbour.

accordance with God's command. Thus, only in Christ is true humanity restored and maintained.

John Paul locates human capacity and freedom in the being of God; the *imago Dei* is the foundation of human morality.⁶⁴ John Paul writes, "Human acts bear within themselves the sign of self-determination of will and choice. The whole sphere of morality derives from this. Man is capable of choosing between good and evil, sustained in this by the voice of conscience, which impels him to good and restrains him from evil."⁶⁵ He believes that, even after original sin, humans have not lost their essential capacity to love God and the neighbour.⁶⁶ Sin has mainly weakened the will but it has not broken the will entirely.⁶⁷ John Paul's belief in unredeemed human goodness shapes his didactic approach to social justice in dialogue with those outside the Christian faith. By implication, if people are instructed how to live in just social relations with the neighbour, they have the capacity to live in accordance with God's law even if they do not believe in Jesus Christ. Thus, John Paul has an optimistic expectation for human capabilities.

Barth, on the other hand, rejected the concept of "unredeemed human goodness," not because people are intrinsically bad but because in the goodness of their original humanity they have made the irrational choice against God. Barth explained, "The seriousness of [the human] situation is much greater than can be expressed by the idea of a setting aside or damaging of his nature which is good. It consists in the crying contradiction that he sets himself—his being in the integrity of his human nature and his being in covenant with God—in the service of evil, and now he has to exist in that service."⁶⁸ Human sin has so damaged humanity that the human is estranged from himself, his neighbour, and God; he is now inclined "'by nature' to hate God and his neighbour."⁶⁹ Yet Barth's anthropology is not entirely pessimistic regarding the capabilities of human action. Human nature has been made new; the ontology of

⁶⁴ *DV*, 36 and *VS*, 13.

⁶⁵ *God*, 232-3. See also *Jesus*, 51-52 on human capacity.

⁶⁶ *Jesus*, 52

⁶⁷ *VS*, 1.

⁶⁸ *CD IV.1.493*.

⁶⁹ *CD IV.1.494*. Barth is quoting here from the Heidelberg Catechism. He emphasised that there is no core of "damaged nature" but man himself poisons his own nature by his pride and sin. In other words, God did not create an evil nature but the human, by turning away from God, made himself evil.

humanity is restored through relation to Jesus Christ. The following section will explore this reconciliation further.

Justification and Social Justice

The Catholic complaint against the Protestant doctrine of justification has addressed the “extrinsic” nature of the justice granted. Catholics have critiqued a purely forensic definition of justification that neglected the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of persons.⁷⁰ When Hans Küng demonstrated to his Catholic counterparts that Barth’s doctrine of imputed righteousness transformed humans intrinsically, he took ecumenical dialogue to a new level. Yet what Küng did not recognise was the discrepancy between the two positions as to the nature of this intrinsic change. For John Paul, Christ draws the goodness out of humanity by giving of himself in solidarity and love.⁷¹ Barth believed that the transformation of humanity was far more radical, evidenced in the radical nature of Christ’s death and resurrection. God’s incarnation transformed humanity from within. His death was the death of human wrong, sin, and pride, and his resurrection made possible their righteousness, their justification.⁷²

For Barth, justification involves the complete remaking of the human person because sin affected the very being of personhood. His doctrine of justification entails an “ontology of relation to Christ,”⁷³ in which true human nature, which was irreducibly perverted by sin, can now be found in Christ alone. According to Barth, the fact that Christ died totally demonstrates that “the sinful reversal takes place at the basis and centre of the being of man, in his heart; and that the consequent sinful perversion then extends to the whole of his being without exception.”⁷⁴

In contrast, John Paul maintains an ontology of continuity with God in which human faculties are not completely lost but merely weakened.⁷⁵ The person is still free

⁷⁰ Anthony Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue*, (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 158-161.

⁷¹ *DM*, 6

⁷² *CD* IV.1.553-4, 627 and *CD* IV.4.24-27.

⁷³ A term borrowed from Trevor Hart in “Christ and God’s Justification of Humanity,” in *Regarding Karl Barth*, 60.

⁷⁴ *CD* IV.1.492.

⁷⁵ *Jesus*, 51. John Paul wrote, “As regards the spiritual faculties this deterioration consists in a darkening of the intellect’s capacity to know the truth, and in a weakening of free will. The will is weakened in the attractions of the goods perceived in the senses and is more exposed to the false images of good

to make moral choices, but the will is enfeebled and inclined to sin. Human persons maintain the essential capacities that define true humanity—reason and freedom—because the *imago Dei* has not been lost; an unredeemed human goodness remains.⁷⁶

The intrinsic nature of justification in Barth's doctrine, therefore, extends farther than John Paul's because real humanity is recreated in Christ; sin no longer characterises the human. Only in Christ is humanity created just and good. In Christ alone humanity finds the freedom to choose good.

Human Act and Formation

The differences in assumptions regarding human ontology also impact their conception of moral formation. Before his election to the papacy, Wojtyla argued that human formation takes place through act. The human, in the freedom of action, shapes himself.⁷⁷ Wojtyla writes, "It is man's actions, his conscious acting, that make of him *what* and *who* he actually is."⁷⁸ Certainly, Christian truth is intrinsic to this shaping, for true human fulfillment is found in good and responsible action, and God's infused grace in Christ draws us towards this action.⁷⁹ Therefore, Wojtyla argued that the human being's ontological structure synthesised both the efficacy of man (human freedom and action) and the subjectiveness of man (the formation of the self through free act).⁸⁰

Wojtyla's insight into human formation calls into question the command ethics of Barth. Do Barth's ethics of command and decision reduce the human self to the sum of her individual acts by being concerned with what humans do rather than who humans are?⁸¹ Does Barth's ontology fail to allow for a continuum of human moral

elaborated by reason under the influence of the passions. However, according to the Church's teaching, it is a case of a relative and not absolute deterioration, *not intrinsic to the human faculties*" [italics mine].

⁷⁶ *Jesus*, 71.

⁷⁷ *AP*, 120.

⁷⁸ *AP*, 98.

⁷⁹ *AP*, 165. Barth critiqued this conception of grace as infused because it fails to show in what sense man is grounded in the great possibility of God, and it fails to make clear how the Christian comes into being as "the man who responds to God's faithfulness with faithfulness, the man who as a free subject is God's true partner in the covenant of grace." CD IV.4.5.

⁸⁰ *AP*, 74-75.

⁸¹ See the critique of Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 177.

formation?⁸² If one begins with the assumption that we fashion our own identity through self-action, Barth may indeed be open to this critique. However, Barth began his ethics by attempting to undermine such an assumption by first grounding the human freedom to act in the ontology of relation to Christ.⁸³ Barth believed that the human was not free to choose good without Christ and that any attempt to do so is ruinous because it is motivated by the pride of the human heart in opposition to God. The ontology of relation to Christ means we can choose good action because Christ has acted in our place, on our behalf.⁸⁴ Christ has restored our true humanity, which is our reconciliation with God and fellow humans. True formation of self is simply not possible outside of the act of Christ on behalf of humans; we participate in that act.⁸⁵ By his making us a part of his act of reconciliation and obedience, men and women find the freedom for right relation with God and for obedience to his command.⁸⁶ In this sense, then, human formation is grounded in an ontology of relation to the particular person of Jesus Christ rather than an appeal to a general *humanum* or a weakened but viable freedom to form oneself.

⁸² Another set of questions addresses the efficacy of human act: Does Barth's emphasis on the action of God undermine the efficacy of human act? Does the human maintain autonomy or is she simply subsumed under the act of God? I did not include these questions lest I repeat the discussion in Chapter Two, the section titled, "Command Ethics and the Problem of Human Freedom." See also CD IV.4.28: "In this work it begins to be genuine intercourse in which the human partner, far from confusing himself with the divine partner or trying to take His place, occupies the place which is appropriate in relation to Him. The work of the Holy Spirit, then, does not entail the paralysing dismissal or absence of the human spirit, mind, knowledge and will."

⁸³ Barth, *The Christian Life*, 4-5 and CD IV.4.21.

⁸⁴ CD IV.1.230. Barth said that, "This One has acted as very man and very Son of God, that He has acted as our Representative and in our name, that His incarnation, His way of obedience has had and has fulfilled as its ultimate meaning and purpose the fact that He willed to do this and has done it: His activity as our Representative and Substitute." Cf. See Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*, 95.

⁸⁵ Webster demonstrates that for Barth, humans become agents by participation in the history of the covenant enacted in Jesus. He states, "Only by virtue of our participation in the covenant through God's grace in Christ that we become agents. This is a direct implication of Barth's earlier replacement of the doctrines of 'nature' or 'creation' by doctrines of the vicarious humanity of Christ and of union with Christ: being human, acting humanly, are possibilities grounded in Christ's incarnational union with us, not in some general *humanum*." Webster, *Ethics of Reconciliation*, 93-4.

⁸⁶ Barth wrote, "As he has given them the power for it, they become the children of God (Jn. 1:12). As such they have and retain peace. Peace, which is coupled with grace in apostolic greetings (Rom. 1:7, etc), means their being before God with their fellows and themselves according to the order of the divine grace of reconciliation. This ordered being is the root of their freedom as the basic and comprehensive determination of their attitude and action. It is the freedom of those who are justified before God, sanctified for him, and called to his service: their freedom to exist as such, and no other freedom but this authentic freedom. The truth, that is, God's Son, which is its creative ground, makes them free (Jn. 8:32, 36). They become and are free only where the Spirit of the Lord is, because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17). These men are called into this freedom. They are not private people. They stand in public service." *The Christian Life*, 23.

The subjective aspect of human formation, then, is not the act of the human upon herself but the human as the subject of God's act and election. Barth's continuum of formation is grounded in God's election to choose human persons as his children. God first chose Christ as his child; the divine sonship of humanity becomes a reality in him alone.⁸⁷ Men and women have the freedom to call on God as Father because of this grace in Christ Jesus. The form [*Gestalt*] of grace corresponds to the shaping [*Gestaltung*] of the Christian life.⁸⁸

In Barth's ethics, the continuity of Christian development and formation takes place because of the continuity of Christ's sonship, the ongoing movement and act of God.⁸⁹ Although Barth describes faith as "a new act each day and hour," he does not mean that these acts are discontinuous. Rather, the Christian is in the process of "always becoming."⁹⁰ The Christian life remains under threat but "the eternity of the gracious will of their Father, the once-for-all act of love performed by his Son their Brother, and the promise and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which are just as valid and effective today as yesterday and tomorrow, ensure the continuity of the Christian life, the perseverance of the saints."⁹¹ For Barth, Christian ethics is not comprised by individual acts that are disconnected from personhood. On the contrary, just Christian acts flow from the relation to Jesus Christ in whom their life as children is actualised and upon whom the continuity of their lives is maintained. In this freedom and continuity of the gospel, the Christian life finds form.⁹²

⁸⁷ *The Christian Life*, 75, 77.

⁸⁸ *The Christian Life*, 44. Cf. Webster, *The Ethics of Reconciliation*, 112.

⁸⁹ Barth writes, "Something very special has to have taken place, and to keep on taking place, when certain people may not only be called the children of God but are this, and as such are qualified, entitled, able, and willing to call upon God as their Father, when in this calling, in their thanks and praise and prayer, the Christian ethos is actualised and maintained and continued and developed. This is not only self-evident; it is totally inconceivable. We can count on it only as on a fact of unique order that the existence of such people and their action is possible, not once alone, but in the continuity of their lives. . . . What has to take place, and to keep on taking place, if people are to be Christians, is a special movement and act of God in which he gives to the Word of his grace—the Word of the reconciliation of the world to him accomplished in Jesus Christ—the specific power to reach these specific people among the many to whom it goes out and is directed, so that they open themselves up to it in freedom, awake to the knowledge that he is their Father and they are his children, and can live in this knowledge. . . . In virtue of this movement and act of God, it can come about that they do in fact begin to call upon him, and continue to do so." *The Christian Life*, 90-91.

⁹⁰ *The Christian Life*, 78.

⁹¹ *The Christian Life*, 94.

⁹² CD IV.4.21.

Human Ontology and Act in Dialogue

Both John Paul and Barth believe that the reconciliation of the human with God in Christ plays a vital role in shaping human action and forming human persons. For John Paul, Christ is integral to action in the social sphere because his example displays the self-giving obedience to God, which must characterise human action towards the other. But his influence is not merely as a model, for in the very experience of love from God and adoption by God in the redemption of Christ, human beings are liberated from sin. This liberation forms the basis for liberation and charity in the social sphere.⁹³ On these points, John Paul and Barth find agreement. Beyond this, however, where John Paul appeals to an ontology that finds its starting point other than Christ and that allows for the capacity (even if by "infused" grace) for free and good human action that is self-determining, Barth's ontology of relation to Christ would disclose a vital difference between the two. Barth locates in Christ (rather than the *imago Dei* or the *analogia entis*) the freedom for human action and the goodness of human action. God's just act in Christ precedes just human action; in being summoned by God's action, human action is a secondary act of grateful response.⁹⁴

Having already reached a substantial agreement through Barth's own move towards a more Catholic emphasis upon the intrinsic effects of justification and God's redemption, the dialogue can continue to move forward by taking a new look at human ontology as it relates to justification and human action. The ethics of Barth challenge John Paul to begin with Christ in exploring and articulating human ontology and a theory of human formation. By locating human freedom solely in Christ, John Paul could continue to make his appeal for good human action and also articulate a theory of human formation that reflects these critical insights.⁹⁵ For instance, such a starting point in Christ can guard against the human pride that would attempt just acts independently of God's gift of justification. The criterion of real humanity highlights those acts that may appear just, but in actuality they are unjust because they are acts in independence from God and fellow-humanity.

From the other side, Barth's ethics are challenged by John Paul to think more concretely about the formation of persons in society. Because Barth gives great

⁹³ *Jesus*, 399.

⁹⁴ *The Christian Life*, 42, 143.

⁹⁵ The work of John Webster in *Barth's Moral Theology* begins to trace the lines of human formation, which are implied in such a Christological ontology.

prominence to the person and work of Christ and the starting point for forming human persons, he fails to develop as fully the impact of human action upon the self and society.⁹⁶ Though one would want constantly to guard against a theory of moral formation that divorces good human action from God's action in Christ, it would prove helpful to explore further the implications of God's act for the ongoing formation of human persons.

Christian Anthropology and Social Ethics

In the introduction to this work, we questioned the viability of the UN Declaration of Human Rights regarding its ability to create the social justice it proposed when it states: "Recognition of the inherent dignity of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."⁹⁷ Although the UN has provided an invaluable contribution by defending human rights on an international scale, the implementation of the declaration has proven problematic because it lacks the grounds for articulating the true dignity of the human person together with the ethics this dignity entails. For instance, the concept of "inalienable rights" creates a stalemate when the rights of one person or group clash with the rights of the other.⁹⁸

The violence currently taking place in Israel/Palestine provides an example of this inherent impotence of an ethics of rights. In recent news, a Hamas leader who survived an assassination attempt by an Israeli gunman vowed, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," meaning that one Israeli leader must die for every Hamas leader. Using an ethic of rights, a Palestinian may argue that he has the right to the home that his family owned for generations and to the defence of his life, his family, and his land. Israelis likewise argue that they have been given a right to the land of their ancestors and to the protection of their communities through self-defence. In the midst of the

⁹⁶ Certainly Barth addresses these themes, but he does so in such brief sketches that the issues such as character formation and the spiritual life are left relatively underdeveloped. See for instance *CD IV.4.42f*, 60, 74. Cf. Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life*, 131-177.

⁹⁷ Adopted and proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) on 10 December 1948, <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

⁹⁸ The Declaration only states in Article 30, "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group, or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein." Such a statement, which it may argue against violence inflicted on another, does not address the problem of a stalemate that may take place due to conflicting rights.

violence that has ensued over these rights, discussions of peace have continued to reach an impasse.

John Paul and the Potential for Solidarity

The social ethics of John Paul and Barth address this problem by grounding their moral doctrine in the person of Christ. For John Paul, the language of self-giving, respecting dignity, and practising solidarity in accordance with the common good provides the basis to an ethic of human rights.⁹⁹ By embracing personalist philosophy, John Paul sought to address the problems of individualism, materialism, and totalitarianism by holding up the human person as the defining criterion of such ideology. His emphasis upon the *imago Dei* serves to affirm and define the dignity of human persons, and the self-giving of Christ frees men and women to embrace an ethic of self-giving and human responsibility for the other.

Through his discussion of responsibility and free acts in accordance with God's law of love, John Paul takes the human rights ethic to a new level of focus upon the dignity of persons, forgiveness, and reconciliation.¹⁰⁰ Based upon his theological anthropology, he can instruct people to choose what is the common good—the good for both parties, to abstain from violence and to uphold the dignity of the other.¹⁰¹ Because of his understanding of the redemption of Christ, John Paul may argue that mercy must overcome justice, that forgiveness must overcome wrath, that good must overcome evil.¹⁰² He may tell the parties that in making these choices they will come to a fuller realization of themselves, their society, and their nations; by choosing the good they may realize their true humanity.

However, such an ethic raises the problem of motivation, especially for people who do share John Paul's Christian beliefs. For instance, hard questions arise when applying such an ethic to situations such as that which we find in Israel/Palestine. How can John Paul make such an appeal to two groups who have rejected the divinity of

⁹⁹ John Paul writes in *RH*, 17: "The fundamental duty of power is solicitude for the common good of society; this is what gives power its fundamental rights."

¹⁰⁰ Cf. "No Peace Without Justice, No Justice Without Forgiveness," Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1997. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

¹⁰¹ *RH*, 17.

¹⁰² *DM*, 7-8. He writes, "Mercy that is truly Christian is also, in a certain sense, the most perfect incarnation of 'equality' between people, and therefore also the most perfect incarnation of justice as well."

Christ? How can he challenge such people to forgive when they neither affirm nor recognise the forgiveness of God in his Son? What is John Paul's basis, then, for ethical appeal? Is it a norm of justice intrinsic to the human person? John Paul himself states that the norm of justice is "often too narrow"¹⁰³ and that the mercy revealed in the Gospel must substantiate the ethical appeal:

Mercy becomes an indispensable element for shaping mutual relationships between people, in a spirit of deepest respect for what is human, and in a spirit of mutual brotherhood. It is impossible to establish this bond between people, if they wish to regulate their mutual relationships solely according to the measure of justice. In every sphere of interpersonal relationships justice must, so to speak, be 'corrected' to a considerable extent by that love which, as St. Paul proclaims, 'is patient and kind' or, in other words, possesses the characteristics of that merciful love which is so much of the essence of the Gospel and Christianity.¹⁰⁴

How could such an appeal possibly address Jewish and Muslim relations or Sikh and Hindu relations? With brotherhood as merely a potential rather than an ontological reality and with Christ as the basis for appeal to mercy and solidarity, Jews and Muslims have been offered no reason for seeking to create brotherhood.

Once again, the issue of human ontology is drawn to the fore. Because John Paul did not define solidarity on an ontological level grounded in Christ, his personalist social appeal is potentially undermined. First, John Paul believes that human persons only exist as neighbour by potential; they *become* neighbour through act. In his essay, "Participation or Alienation?" Wojtyla writes, "The *I—other* relationship, as I pointed out earlier, does not exist in us as an already accomplished fact; only the potentiality for it exists."¹⁰⁵ Likewise, persons become neighbours only through act, in accordance with the command of God to love. Their relation as neighbour is only a potential rather than an ontological reality.¹⁰⁶

Such a belief creates a problem for his social ethics because it tends toward an abstract ethic that can prove problematic for discerning and acting in accordance with

¹⁰³ *DM*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *DM*, 14. He applies this to society as well: "Society can become ever more human only if we introduce into the many-sided setting of interpersonal and social relationships, not merely justice, but also that 'merciful love' which constitutes the messianic message of the Gospel."

¹⁰⁵ *Person and Community*, 201.

¹⁰⁶ *Person and Community*, 200. See also *SRS*, 40 where John Paul argues that the trinity is "a new model for human unity of the human race, which must ultimately *inspire* our solidarity" [*italics mine*]. The triune life of God is not a reflection of what exists between real humans, but it is merely a model for the potential of unity.

justice in concrete situations and encounters. Because John Paul embraces an abstract, universal theory of humanity, his ethics must necessarily be abstract. He acknowledges the limits of such abstraction:

Participation in the humanity of other people, of *others* and *neighbours*, does not arise primarily from an understanding of the essence 'human being,' which is by nature general and does not bring us close enough to the human being as a concrete *I*. This does not mean that understanding the essence 'human being' is of no consequence for participation, that it is foreign or even opposed to participation. Far from it. An understanding of this essence opens up the way to participation, but it does not itself determine participation.¹⁰⁷

He attempts to overcome this problem by arguing that understanding human essence—in her potential for solidarity with the other—opens up the way for participation. Yet, because he conceives of humanity in a general way, his Christian anthropology does not ground real persons in a relation of participation with the other or to solidarity with the other, but *only* to the understanding that solidarity is a potential reality. At the core, the *imago Dei* in humanity is inherently individualistic. Regarding such an approach, Ray Anderson explains:

If the I-Thou relation with God constitutes humanity in an individual sense, an act against another person does not directly touch the *imago* except in an ethical sense. Because God, as the *Thou* who constitutes the true orientation to the self, wills that I also love that which he loves, my fellow human being, I have an ethical obligation to support the life of each person whom God loves. This, however, makes love first of all an abstraction and only consequently a matter of immediate and practical concern.¹⁰⁸

By implication, social ethics can formulate abstract principles, apply laws, and discuss rights. However, because such discussions take place based on assumptions regarding general humanity, they risk missing the ethical demand inherent in the encounter with concrete persons.

When one is facing a concrete ethical situation, such as the current conflict in Israel/Palestine, John Paul may only appeal to an abstract "ought," a conception of justice and mercy which resides in the human person. For John Paul, the Israeli ought to view the Palestinian as a *potential* neighbor and act so as to uphold his rights and promote justice on his behalf. However, when the Israeli parent suffers the loss of his child through the action of a suicide bomber emerging out of the Palestinian sector, the

¹⁰⁷ *Person and Community*, 201. Cf. Samuel Gregg, *Challenging the Modern World*, 201-204 and GS 32.

¹⁰⁸ Ray Anderson, *On Being Human*, (Pasadena: Fuller Seminary Press, 1982), 75.

potential neighbor has now become an *actual* enemy. In defense of the intrinsic right to defend and avenge the death of the child, the Israeli parent dissolves the ethical claim to act with justice toward his enemy on behalf of his own self interest for justice. The same, of course, is true for the Palestinian parent whose child is killed in the violence of retaliation. While John Paul can appeal to the principle of basic human rights grounded in the image of God, the very sense of justice that resides in the individual person may contain the seeds of violence.

Such a conception of ethics and rights proves problematic because it divides the formal law from the concrete personhood of the Jew or the Palestinian. The formal, inalienable right, takes precedence over acting towards one's neighbour. While one could command the Palestinian to love his neighbour or impose on the Jew the imperative to give of himself, such an ethic would be intercepted by the person's own sense of justice and could merely lead to further violence. There is no concrete, personal, or material content to such a right or law. Merely an obligation exists, and such an obligation carries the seed of violence because persons carry the potential to become either neighbour or enemy. Therefore, with just humanity as an abstract essence and justice as an abstract principle, humans may justify their own acts of violence on the basis of individual rights and they may become actual enemies through their acts of violence against the other.

Returning to the prior question regarding motivation, what appeal exists to Jews and Palestinians to act as neighbours if their brotherhood is only an obligation, a potential? If one acts as neighbour and the other refuses to act as neighbour, there can be no solidarity and the human potential is left unfulfilled. What motivation would one have to transcend her political situation by acting as neighbour, especially after a history of broken agreements? John Paul's optimism regarding humanity may cause him to think that men and women are indeed capable of such acts of transcendence, triumphant acts that create brotherhood. However, if humans are only under obligation to abstract ideals of justice and mercy, then John Paul's anthropological ethics contain the potential for acts of violence and do not provide a strong enough motivation to act as neighbour in concrete situations.

Karl Barth and the Ontology of Relation as a Basis for Ethics

Barth takes a very different approach by making his starting point for social ethics the personhood of Jesus Christ. In Christ, one discovers not only the formal law,

"Love your neighbour," but also the concrete material reality of the neighbour as fellow-humanity. Not only does the law have an ethical claim, but the concrete person also makes an ethical claim. For Barth, the person is not neighbour merely by potential but in *concrete reality*. The concrete reality of the other generates the ethical claim to *be* neighbourly. The ethical claim is not merely a principle by which one can potentially justify one's own behaviour; the ethical claim is a person. John Webster helps to explain this point:

For Barth, ethics is rooted in *nature*. By 'nature' is meant, not a reality prior to or existing as a condition of possibility for 'grace,' nor some general *humanum* which grace perfects or completes: of 'nature' in these senses, Barth's theology knows nothing. What is meant, rather, is simply nature as *that which is*. Barth believes that good human action is generated, shaped, and judged by 'that which is,' and that 'that which is' is a Christological, not a pre-Christological, category.¹⁰⁹

Like John Paul, Barth grounds ethics, in the nature of the human person. However, because human nature is a Christological category, human nature is determined by Christ's established relation with humanity. Humans are neighbours by nature rather than by potential.

In other words, the ethics of Barth seek to describe the ontology of relation to Christ, which characterises the ontology of relation to the other in the *analogia relationis*. According to Barth, human persons exist as neighbours because Christ has reconciled people to one another in correspondence to the divine image. For Barth, it is not a matter of choosing to become neighbour,¹¹⁰ for human persons have been reconciled in Christ as neighbours. Therefore, the material reality that all human beings are neighbours constitutes a moral demand upon all persons, Christian or Jew or Muslim, whether or not they recognise this reality.

Such an ethical appeal may be critiqued on Kantian grounds by raising the question of how there can be any obligation upon someone who does not recognise the force of the obligation.¹¹¹ In other words, can an obligation exist for the person even if one is not aware of his duty? Such a question again highlights the difference between John Paul and Barth at this very point. John Paul's ethic addresses this Kantian

¹⁰⁹ Webster, *Ethics of Reconciliation*, 214.

¹¹⁰ Webster, *Ethics*, 216.

¹¹¹ Kant argued that the human necessarily "must judge that he *can* do what the law tells him unconditionally that he *ought* to do." Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Mary Gregor, trans., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 186.

question because, like Kant, John Paul appeals to an abstract principle, an "ought" which persons "can" perform. For John Paul, such act is a potential because humans have access to the laws of nature through reason.¹¹² Barth turns this approach on its head, however, because he *begins* with the existence of human as neighbour, and from such existence, the ethical appeal arises.¹¹³

In contrast to Kant, Barth argued that the moral conscience is not the command, rather, the ethical command has the character of an "ethical event" that is grounded in the concrete, social and historical situation by which one person "encounters" another.¹¹⁴ In other words, Barth argued that *what is* precedes and determines the "ought."¹¹⁵ For this reason, the encounter with a fellow-human makes an ethical demand upon one whether or not one is aware of the ethical demand. In his exposition of the command to love one's neighbour as oneself, Barth makes no distinction between the Christian and non-Christian in this regard. "For how can we fail to see that even outwith [sic] the Christian sphere and quite apart from the concept of Christian love humanity is not necessarily present in that perverse and unfounded way, but for all the perverse and unfounded interpretations it is genuinely there, and is to be sought and found in the direction which we have taken."¹¹⁶

The universal application of an ethic of justice and human rights has been well established by John Paul based on the principle of *analogia entis*, by which every human person bears to some degree an intrinsic sense of integrity and value as created in the image of God. We have shown that Barth, in his approach to the issue through his Christological anthropology, can argue that all humans are bound to one another as

¹¹² Wojtyla/John Paul differed with Kant at many levels, especially regarding the relation of ethics to human experience, act, and drives. In addition, he located the "ought" in the law of God. However, his appeal to natural law as a basis for ethics maintains this Kantian connection between the "ought" which implies "can." In *Persons in Communion*, see "The Role of Reason in Ethics," 67-69; "The Separation of Act from Experience," 23-32 and 40-2; "The Basis of the Moral Norm," 81-3.

¹¹³ Although Barth was deeply influenced by Kant in his early years, particularly with respect to his epistemology, Barth later rejected Kant's formal ethical criterion as basically "without content." Busch, 44-45.

¹¹⁴ Barth wrote in his *Ethics*, "It is not ethics but an ethical even that takes place between two persons," 354.

¹¹⁵ *Ethics*, 431. Similarly, Bonhoeffer wrote, "The norm and limit of all empirical sociality is established in ontic basic-relations--an assertion that will be of great significance when we deal with the concept of the church. . . This takes us back to what we said at the beginning of this study about the normative character of the ontic basic-relations. In the sphere of Christian ethics it is not Ought that effects Is, but Is that effects Ought." *Sanctorum Communion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Vol. 1), 36, 211.

¹¹⁶ *CD III.2* 277.

an ontological construct of personal being. The question remains: How can an ethical appeal be made to persons in their concrete situation so as to hold them accountable to uphold justice and human rights? This is especially a problem for Barth's position, it would appear, because the Christological basis for his ethical anthropology remains hidden from those who do not yet have this knowledge, which can come only by special revelation. The fact that John Paul also holds that Jesus Christ provides a model and motive for ethical action creates somewhat the same problem for him.

By returning to the case of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, we can pursue this question to another level. Barth's approach to the same situation would be quite different. For Barth, every human being exists in solidarity with other persons. This is a reality that does not depend upon special revelation but is based on the intuitive knowledge that another human person is a fellow human being when viewed apart from ideological, religious, ethnic, and political factors. Underneath all that divides human persons into categories based on culture, race, religion or national identity, lies what Anderson has called a "core social paradigm," a social structure of humanity that exists as a common denominator for all persons.¹¹⁷

The demand upon both the Palestinian and the Israeli in this case is not, first of all, an ethical demand, but a summons to be human and to recognise the common humanity of the other.¹¹⁸ An Israeli child who wanders into a Palestinian home and presents a claim upon the Palestinian adults in that home to act for the welfare of that child. Failure to act for the welfare of that child is not only an ethical failure, according to Barth, but a failure to be human. Ought Palestinian and Israeli parents act humanly toward each other's children? Yes, because they *are* human. Thus, Barth's ethic does not depend upon an ethical principle, whether an intrinsic sense of human justice (*analogia entis*), nor an abstract principle of moral reason (Kant). Rather, it rests upon the intrinsic recognition of one's own humanity as bound up with the humanity of other persons. One who does not respond to this demand is acting inhumanly, not merely unethically. When one has drawn humanity so deeply into one's own self interest so as to fail to recognize the humanity of another, an appeal to an ethical conscience or sense of justice will fall on sterile soil. This is the reason that Barth argues that a sense of

¹¹⁷ "Socialcultural Implications of a Christian Perception of Humanity," in, Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*, 161-177.

¹¹⁸ Barth calls this "the criterion of humanity," CD III.4.536. With regard to the neighbour see CD III.285ff.

humility (not arrogance or capability) and repentance are the necessary pre-requisites to ethical action.¹¹⁹

Such an ethic provides the basis for addressing the situation of violence in Israel/Palestine. By viewing actual situations from this ontology of relation, one may argue that Israeli parents have as much ethical responsibility for Palestinian children as for their own. Likewise, Palestinian parents have ethical responsibility for Israeli young people. They are responsible to uphold the life of the child, the life of their neighbour. Because by their very nature they are human-with-fellow-humanity, they are responsible to the concrete person who is their neighbour.

By contrast, the UN Declaration does not demonstrate why the violence in Israel/Palestine is an act of injustice. Individuals may argue that they are merely defending their own rights. In addition, the individualism of John Paul's conception of the *imago Dei* does not substantiate the call to Muslim and Jews to live in solidarity with one another. Barth's ethics describe an entirely new "moral space,"¹²⁰ in which Muslim and Jews exist not primarily in their political or cultural context but first as fellow-humans. Such ethical ground brings concrete humanity into encounter with the other as child or parent or neighbour.

Because persons exist as fellow-humans in encounter, Barth can appeal to the concrete person, the Jewish child who is innocent of the political injustice that surrounds him and who makes an ethical claim upon a Palestinian mother whom he encounters with his request for food or for shelter from harm. The cluttering of the adult's conscience with questions of justice may actually distract the adult from the claim of the encounter. In the story of the good Samaritan, the question of righteousness and purity distracted the priest from his ethical claim of his injured neighbour. If the Jewish mother has the resources, of course she should feed the child in need, whether that child is Palestinian or Jewish. For humans exist as parent and child and neighbour, fellow-beings in encounter.

¹¹⁹ "As we do not have Christ to the extent that we do not want our fellowmen, and as there can be no divine authority whose acknowledgement does not imply and enclose the acknowledgement of human authority, so there is no Christian humility which exhausts itself in repentance before God and will not become ministry to the neighbor as well. . . We can neither lose repentance before God in service to the neighbor nor service to the neighbor in repentance before God." Barth, *Ethics*, 419. The previous paragraphs are drawn directly from a conversation with Ray Anderson at Fuller Theological Seminary on June 30, 2003 and from further correspondence on July 1, 2003.

¹²⁰ From Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 99.

For this reason, human dignity never carries the potential for establishing the right of one individual over the right of another. Human dignity begins with the humility of accepting that *that which is*—the moral space in which humans are reconciled as neighbours. Human ethics entails the ethical demand posed by the neighbour one encounters. One does not have the choice of becoming or not becoming a neighbour to the other, for the defining core of humanity includes the neighbour. One may have the choice to deny this reality, but in doing so, one denies her own humanity as well as the humanity of the other. In this manner, “real humanity” for Barth means living in this relation of communion with the fellow-human, the neighbour both near and far.

Conclusion to Chapter Seven

In this final chapter, we have explored the differences underlying the claim by both John Paul and Barth that Christian anthropology provides a foundation for social ethics. John Paul’s more optimistic view of the capabilities of human reason and act have moved him toward a social ethic that relies upon the potential of humans to become neighbours by acting in accordance with intrinsic norms of justice and peace. While Barth would affirm John Paul’s appeal to God as the basis for ethics and to Christ as the one who reveals true humanity, Barth would call into question John Paul’s very optimism regarding unredeemed humanity because of his own concern to lay bare any seeds of violence that may undermine the ethical appeal.

Coming from a setting in which such optimism in both human reason and act led to oppression and violence, Barth sought to maintain a humility which affirms the goodness of humanity by locating that goodness in the election, reconciliation, and redemption of Jesus Christ. By relying primarily upon the revelation of Christ as the epistemological starting point, Barth attempted to lay bare his own ethical categories to the critique that God’s revelation brings to humans conceptions of justice. When he discovered in Brunner’s appeal to “orders of creation” and “natural theology,” a seed of arrogance that could potentially call into question God’s own revelation of justice or could substantiate the ethics of the German Christians, Barth sought different grounds for his own ethics in the person of Christ.¹²¹

¹²¹ Likewise, he called into to question the belief that unredeemed human persons could act in accordance with God’s justice for he recognised that such a claim undermined the death and resurrection of Christ. For if Christ, in his humility, died completely, does not that reveal that the human in her pride

Barth's Christological ethics challenge John Paul at this very point. While John Paul's ethics are drawn out of Christian theology, his ontology relies upon an individualistic definition of being and an abstract notion of general humanity that undermines his social appeals. John Paul has made a vital contribution to articulating and promoting just societies through his appeal to human dignity, responsibility, personal formation, and his defence of human rights. However, Barth's anthropology better substantiates the appeal to human responsibility in actual encounters between persons because his ontological construct of humanity is fundamentally social. For this reason, a comparison between the two authors has proven fruitful both in highlighting the fundamental areas of convergence (the starting point for social ethics in Christian anthropology) as well as the area of divergence in their ontological construct of personhood. We have argued in this final chapter that Barth's relational ontology provides a stronger basis for appeal to human responsibility in the social sphere.

Final Conclusion

This work has proposed that social ethics and social programs often fail to account for the complexity of human personhood. The implementation of social ethical statements such as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, while they prove helpful, force us to raise questions regarding the cause of the continued violence in a situation such as the one in Israel/Palestine. Such a statement reaches a stalemate when individual rights collide. Both sides argue that they are victims and that their intrinsic sense of justice justifies their retaliation. This clash of individual rights and the continued violence calls for a deeper investigation into the meaning of persons in societal relations.

This work has put forward the thesis that social ethics and social programs require an understanding of personhood that accounts for the complexity of human relations in society. I have proposed that Christian theology provides an effective foundation for social ethics because its anthropology addresses complexities such as ethical knowledge, human freedom and action, and the social relations of actual persons in society. In addition, the Christian theologians, John Paul II and Karl Barth, account for and address the complexity of implementing an ethic of human rights, by appealing

and sloth and untruth could not be reconciled with God or her neighbour without becoming a participant in complete death and resurrection?

to an ethic of respect of and responsibility for the neighbour that is built upon the foundation of Christian anthropology.

John Paul appeals to Christian anthropology as the basis for his social doctrine. Such an anthropology provides the basis for his recurring appeal to the dignity of human persons as the critical critique of the structures and systems of human societies. He argues that all human persons have a moral and free component of being, grounded in the *imago Dei* of individual personhood. When an impasse is reached by claims of "right," he appeals to Christ, as the content of the ethical command to give of oneself in the mercy and forgiveness which overcomes violence.

While it takes steps towards addressing human responsibility, I have suggested that John Paul's Christological ethic retains the potential for justifying and committing violence against the neighbour for three reasons. First, John Paul's appeal to moral law as intrinsic to human personhood creates the potential for continued violence because such optimism regarding a person's epistemological access to notions of justice may fail to critique those acts that contain a seed of violence. Humans can too easily justify their behaviour based upon the appeal to an intrinsic sense of justice, without recognising the manner in which their own self-interest or "rightful claims" can influence their sense of justice. For this reason, every person's "intrinsic sense of justice" must be set in light of the critical criterion of God's command.

Second, John Paul's ontological construct of personhood retains the potential for violence because it is individualistic. He defines the individual person as "individual substance"¹²² and he asserts that humans are neighbours only by potential, leaving individuals the choice to act as neighbours and, by means of this action, to become neighbours in actuality. Such an ontological construct leaves for a human person the responsibility to become a neighbour. But what motivation exists in the issue that we have raised, i.e. when individual rights collide?

Such a question raises the third problem regarding the appeal of John Paul's Christological ethics to non-Christian persons. John Paul can make a clear argument for Christian persons to act in accordance with Christ's mercy and forgiveness, which overcomes the law of justice. However, because his ethic of forgiveness is based in Christian theology, how can he motivate those who are not Christian to extend forgiveness?

¹²² Wojtyla, TP, 167-169.

Karl Barth, on the other hand, located ethical content in relation and encounter rather than in a Christian principle or intrinsic moral law. He argued that humanity itself is co-humanity. Humans are not individuals with the potential to become neighbours. Rather, the ontological makeup of human persons is fundamentally relational; human persons are neighbours because Christ revealed and restored this determination of fellow-humanity to all human persons. While this assertion is determined by Barth's Christology, it is actualised anthropologically. One's own humanity is bound up in the humanity of the other. To impinge upon the life of one's neighbour is to impinge upon one's own life and self. For this reason, the personhood of the other creates an ethical demand that takes priority over one's innate sense of justice. Such a view of personhood creates the basis to argue for human responsibility and to address the impasse that occurs when individual rights collide.

In comparing these two men, this thesis has not only provided a theological response to the stalemate reached in an ethic of human rights but it has also brought forward the dialogue regarding Catholic and Protestant theology and social ethics. Recent discussions have centered on notions of natural law and common grace as a starting point for such an ecumenical dialogue.¹²³ In this thesis, I have argued in favour of a different starting point for such discussions: theological anthropology, specifically the ontological construct of human personhood. Such a starting point takes seriously the vital critique raised by Barth regarding the potential for violence located in assumptions of an intrinsic notion of justice or an unredeemed human goodness. In addition, this starting point may more adequately address a postmodern culture that is deeply suspicious of notions of natural law.¹²⁴

The next step forward involves ongoing discussion among Christian theologians regarding the issues raised by this dialogue vis-à-vis the ontology of personhood. This work has raised significant differences, which must be discussed with a view towards the implications for social doctrine. The way forward also includes discourse at the level of praxis, by seeking to understand, assess, and apply the insights of Christian anthropology in the realm of human society. While it lies beyond the scope of this

¹²³ See for instance, Michael Cromartie, Editor. *A Preserving Grace: Protestant, Catholics, and Natural Law*.

¹²⁴ For instance, Alisdair MacIntyre traced this shift in his work, *After Virtue*: "It [is] no longer possible to appeal to moral criteria in a way that it had been possible in other times and places – and [this is] a moral calamity." *After Virtue: A Study of Moral Theology*, (London: Duckworth, 1981), ix. See also Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-5.

dissertation, implications as to how a deeper understanding of human solidarity as an ethical construct might inform public policy and strategic approaches to human justice need to be drawn out and applied. For instance, what are the implications for constructing institutions and structures on a national and global level which reflect these critical insights? Or how does the understanding of human persons as co-humanity call into question the vast economic divide between industrialised and developing nations? And what solutions does such an anthropology put forward at both the personal and the structural levels?

This thesis has argued that based upon a richer understanding of personhood that is derived from Christian theology, strategic social ethics and commitment to social justice can advance the true dignity and humanity of persons in society. From a theological perspective, Jesus Christ provides the foundation for justice in the social sphere, as well as the criterion by which to assess human systems and practice. The givenness of our co-humanity is defined in and through him. It is this and this alone that can serve to liberate us from human arrogance, individualism, and sectarianism and provide the starting point toward understanding ourselves and upholding the dignity of the other.

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For ease of reference, this bibliography has been divided as follows:

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